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The Camelot Classics.

EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS.

GREAT ENGLISH PAINTERS.

GREAT

ENGLISH PAINTERS.

Selected Biographies from Allan Cunningham's "Lives of Eminent British Painters."

ARRANGED AND EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY WILLIAM SHARP.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, 24 WARWICK LANE,
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INTRODUCTION.

FEW biographical works have deserved so well of the public as Allan Cunningham's celebrated *Lives of the most Eminent British Painters.* The secret of the success of the "Lives" lies in the fact that they *are* biographical records, narrated with sprightly vigour and discriminating intelligence; not mere critical dissertations, uninteresting to the uninitiated, subject to the indifference born of maturer judgment. Comparisons seldom really fit, whether made of a man or of a place—whether Reynolds be called the English Michael Angelo, or Edinburgh the modern Athens: but there is at anyrate some justice in the application to Cunningham of the designation, "The Scottish Vasari." In common with much of the famous record of the Italian chronicler, the main interest of the "Lives of British Painters" is concentrated upon personal details: the *man* is the dominant theme, the *work* merely incidental. This is as it should be, in a book intended for the general reader. The severity of criticism has condemned much in Vasari's chronicle that the gossip-loving Giorgio probably considered irrefutable, but even in

this day of jealous supervision of fact, his biographical records retain much of their old value in matters of detail, while in point of interest they have suffered no material diminution whatever. As yet, and probably for a long time to come, the same may be written of Allan Cunningham. We now know that in some of his judgments he was mistaken, that portions of his chronicle are faulty—and, again, as was inevitable, that circumstances of time and change have modified the accuracy of what were, in his day, reliable statements. But in the main we have no pleasanter and more trustworthy "gossip" than the worthy sculptor's assistant, accustomed to "toiling in marble and bronze all day, and at night dipping the pen in biographical ink to earn an honest penny for the bairns' bread." Even at this date—as Mrs. Heaton has pointed out in what is much the best edition of the "Eminent Painters"*—"it is curious to find how little our real knowledge has been widened" since Cunningham's death.

It would, of course, have been quite impracticable to have given the whole, or anything like the whole, of the "Lives" in a single volume of *The Camelot Classics;* so I have selected therefrom (besides the Introductory Chapter on Art and Artists in England up to the Restoration period) the biographies of Hogarth, Richard Wilson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, and William Blake. These five celebrated artists are not only men whose biographies are of necessity full of permanent interest, but are the best representatives of the splendid sunrise of English Art—of the Art of Painting in England. Hogarth, the caricaturist—or rather the pictorial satirist; Wilson,

* *Lives of the most Eminent British Painters.* By Allan Cunningham. Annotated and continued to the present time by Mrs. Charles Heaton. In 3 vols. (George Bell & Sons.)

the father, or at anyrate one of the chief progenitors of landscape-painting in this country; the courtly Reynolds, first of our great colourists; Gainsborough, taking, with Sir Joshua, place among the highest in rank of the portrait-painters of modern times, and the initiator in "landscape" of unconventional and natural methods *versus* pseudo-classicism and sterile formality; and William Blake, the visionary poet-painter—equally at home in describing in verse the woes of the little chimney-sweeper, and in delineating with inspired touch "The Ancient of Days"—whom a swiftly-discerning critic of Blake's own time, Charles Lamb, declared to be "one of the most extraordinary persons of the age."

The lives and works of many other deservedly famous men, besides these, were duly set forth by Cunningham. Perhaps, at a future date, the more important of the biographies of those men who have worthily sustained the tradition of English art may be given in this series; but meanwhile the present volume will serve the end in immediate view.

Allan Cunningham himself should have a few words devoted to him. His father and mother were respectable people of the small-farming class: latterly, John Cunningham acted as a factor for some Dumfriesshire lairds, and it was in Nithsdale that Allan, his fourth son, was born, in December 1784. It was in the village of Dalswinton that Allan passed his youth—a period, by his own and other accounts, very happily spent. Common-sense was one of the most marked characteristics of the young stone-mason; and it was this often foolishly abused mental quality that kept him from scorning the trade to which he had been apprenticed, or from brooding over purely fanciful

wrongs, when as a lad he found his intelligence constantly expanding and his interests reaching a higher level than did those of his companions. For it was as a stone-mason that Allan Cunningham first began the battle of life, and it is satisfactory to know that if his intellectual powers had not lifted him into another sphere, he would have made his way in his quondam calling. From his boyhood the ballad-poetry and traditional lore of Nithsdale and Annandale, of the Scottish lowlands generally, always had a peculiar fascination for him. Besides fostering his own poetic powers, this mental pabulum enlarged his sympathies and widened his intellectual horizon: he began to have more and more realisable dreams of "doing something" himself. He indulged in the joys of versifying, as have done many scores of Scottish lads of his own class before and since, but his "effusions" had enough in them of native inspiration to distinguish them from the experimental voicings which come into ephemeral existence in almost every north-country village. He was naturally proud when verses by him under the pseudonymous signature "Hidallan" appeared in one of the minor London magazines; but it was not till after the visit to Nithsdale of Robert Cromek, a well-known engraver and a man of some reading and discrimination, that he became enamoured of and acted upon the idea, first suggested by Mr. Cromek, of entering into the same field of collection and research which had in part occupied the labours of Scott and Bishop Percy. When ultimately, however, "Nithsdale and Galloway Song" saw the light, acute judges were not long in finding out that many of the so-called legendary verses were not survivals at all, but the production of a living poet; and it was not till Professor Wilson, in a

contribution to *Blackwood's Magazine*, made it clear that to Allan Cunningham was mainly due the credit of this collection, that the true authorship became publicly known. It was on the recommendation of this same Mr. Cromek (who, it may be added, reaped all the profit and most of the initial reputation gained by the publication of the volume which Cunningham had forwarded to him for his consideration, unfortunately without stipulations) that the young stone-mason was induced to burn his ships behind him by adventuring to London and there seeking congenial employment. More fortunate than many who before and since have been sucked into the metropolitan vortex, Allan after a time found employment—hard work and little pay, in the work-room of a minor sculptor called Bubb. Though his wages were small, he was now able to eke out his means by journalistic and magazine work; and on the head of his slow-growing success he married "the lass he'd left behind him," who at the opportune moment had deserted the romantic loneliness of "Preston Mill" for the domestic bliss which she felt sure awaited her in "Lunnon." Time passed, and just as the necessity of employment that would be at once remunerative and stable urged itself upon Cunningham's mind, he was engaged as assistant by the sculptor Chantrey, then just entering into the flood-tide of reputation and prosperity. From being an *employé* he rose to be a co-worker with, and a friend of, Chantrey: and this friendship between the two men lasted till the death of the more famous, which preceded Cunningham's only by a few months.

The success of Cunningham in the writing of Scottish lyrics emboldened him to attempt a tragedy; but "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell" had even less good fortune than his three or four prose romances, of which the best is *Sir Michael*

Scott. As a story-teller he was much more in his element, and his *Cameronian Tales* and *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry* are still widely enough read. It was in 1829 that were published the first two volumes of the work upon which his enduring reputation must be based. It was, according to his own account, Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* that first suggested to him the idea of writing the *Lives of Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, to give that work its full title. The two volumes of the new biographical work met with immediate success, and the author lost no time in following them up with equally readable and, as it proved, equally popular biographies—ultimately completed with the issue of the sixth volume. An important edition, in eight volumes, of the *Life and Works of Robert Burns*, and a *Life of Sir David Wilkie*, are the two remaining productions of notice of the indefatigable Allan. After a life of considerable happiness, incessant hard work, and no slight measure of prosperity, Allan Cunningham ceased from his labours at the age of fifty-seven.

I need not write further of the "Lives." Those which I have selected for this volume will afford to the reader not only much entertainment and possibly instruction, but also an index to the fund of interest that awaits him if he care to make further acquaintance with the writings of Allan Cunningham. Those who agree with me will be well satisfied to endorse the opinion of "Christopher North:" these biographies "are full of a fine and an instructed enthusiasm. He speaks boldly but reverentially of genius, and of men of genius; strews his narrative with many flowers of poetry, disposes and arranges his materials skilfully, and is, in a few words, an admirable critic on art —an admirable biographer of artists."

Since the publication of the "Lives," there has naturally

been considerable accumulation of material for would-be successors to Allan Cunningham. Individual artists have been much "biographied," as some one has worded it; but it can hardly be said that a worthy successor has as yet continued the task begun by the Scots mason-body, as Cunningham sometimes jocosely called himself.

It would be impracticable to review here in detail those artists with whom Cunningham was perforce unable to deal: still less could any adequate idea be conveyed to the reader of the various phases through which Art has passed during the last four or five decades, of the several vital influences now at work. But some words may be written of the most important of those artistic phases, the often discussed, and still much misunderstood, Preraphaelite movement: with some remarks on the limits of Photography, a subject germane to any discussion concerning Realism in Art.

Of the individual it has been said that there is no such thing as an absolute independency of antecedents; and what is true of the individual is true of any movement in the intellectual or social evolution of man. By the way in which the movement known as *The Preraphaelite* has been and is even yet spoken of, it would seem to be regarded by many as a mere eccentric aberration from orthodox methods, sprouting up irresponsibly and unexpectedly, and with the sudden sterile growth of the proverbial mushroom. But that this is far from being the case any one having real knowledge of our antecedent art and literature will know well: that it *could not* be the case will at once be recognised by any student of historic evolution.

The latter half of the nineteenth century has been fitly

called the English Renaissance.* But this term would be quite out of place if applied only to the outcome of Preraphaelite principles; for the spirit of change has been at work not only in one or two arts, and among a small band of enthusiasts, but in all the arts, in social life and thought, in science, and in political development, and among all the foremost men of the day—scientists, poets, artists, philosophers, religionists, and politicians. Indeed, to say that the breath of change has passed over our time is not sufficiently adequate, for if we contrast the present with so late a period as thirty years ago we will perceive that there has been nothing short of a national awakening. The national mind, as represented by the great mass of intelligent fairly cultivated people, may be likened to the very sunflower the ultra-æstheticists have brought into such disrepute, turning towards a light of which the need is felt—the same light, whether it is the *Beautiful* of the artist and poet, the *Truth* of the philosopher, or the *Higher Morality* of the teacher and the priest. In religion, and in what is now called sociology, as well as in literature, the first stirrings of this awakening spirit appear unmistakably, if faintly, towards the close of the last century. Before Byron and Keats and Shelley and Coleridge and Wordsworth there was "something in the air," the first indefinite revulsion from the bugbear of an effete pseudo-classicism; such a pseudo-classicism as received in France its deathblow, on a certain evening in February 1830, when *Hernani* was the victorious standard of the Romanticists. But as these stirrings grew and grew the hearts of men of

* The following pages mainly consist of a revised and considerably condensed version of remarks by the present editor in his chapter on the Preraphaelite Idea in *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study* (Macmillan & Co.).

true genius took fire with a new enthusiasm, and in poetic literature there came that splendid outburst of Romanticism of which Coleridge was the first and most potent exponent. Human thought flows onward like a sea, where flow and ebb alternate; hence after the deaths of Shelley and Keats and Byron and Coleridge there came the lapse that preludes the new wave. At last a time came when a thrill of expectation, of new desire, of hope, passed through the higher lives of the nation; and what followed hereafter were the Oxford movement in the Church of England, the Preraphaelite movement in art, and the far-reaching Gothic Revival. Different as these movements were in their primary aims, and still more differing in the individual representations of interpreters, they were in reality closely interwoven, one being the outcome of the other. The study of mediæval art, which was fraught with such important results, was the result of the widespread ecclesiastical revival, which in its turn was the offspring of the Tractarian movement in Oxford. The influence of Pugin was potent in strengthening the new impulse, and to him succeeded Ruskin with *Modern Painters* and Newman with the *Tracts for the Times.* Primarily, the Preraphaelite movement had its impulse in the Oxford religious revival; and however strange it may seem to say that such men as Holman Hunt and Rossetti and, later, Frederick Shields followed directly in the footsteps of Newman and Pusey and Keble, it is indubitably so. Theoretical divergence on minor points does not militate against the classing together of certain men, whether writers or artists, so long as in the main the results of their endeavours assimilate. Between two such artists as Dante Rossetti and Mr. Frederick Shields there is, of necessity, much in common, and in their work in art there is an unmistakable affinity; yet to the older the

"Gothic" spirit powerfully appealed, and to the younger, I think I am not mistaken in saying, it seems fitter for a crude age than for one which would cultivate the highest art.

Earnestness was at the period of which I am speaking the watchword of all those who were in revolt against whatever was effete, commonplace, or unsatisfactory. Religion and art were closelier drawn to one another than had yet been the case in England, and it seemed as if at last the two were going to walk hand in hand; and even when the twain were not directly united in spirit, there was a determination to get at the truth of things, to work in the most absolute sincerity, that made the pursuit of art a very different thing from what it too generally was. It could not have been otherwise but that such a man as John Ruskin was at once and strongly attracted to the programme and initiatory works of the young artists known as the Preraphaelites, for in them he recognised men of undoubted talent and possessed with a new purpose—talents such as had not been exercised in art since Albert Dürer, and a purpose vital with truth and throbbing with the pulse of ardent and lofty endeavour. Their choice of designation could not be said to be fortunate; for, apart from anything else, the mere selection of an epithet like *Preraphaelite* was a mistake, playing as it did into the hands of those whose chief weapon was ridicule. The term, as a definitive title, was quite a misnomer; for between the works of the band of artists who preceded Raphael, and the productions of those who were called after them in the nineteenth century, there was no real resemblance; the only bond that united them was the principle of going direct to nature for inspiration and guidance, for, as Mr. Ruskin points out, the young brotherhood of contemporary artists were altogether superior to

the Italian Preraphaelites in skill of manipulation, power of drawing, and knowledge of effect; as superior in these as they were inferior in grace of design. To the title must certainly be imputed at least part of the widespread misunderstanding that beset the early efforts of Millais, Holman Hunt, Rossetti, and others,—the idea that they imitated, perhaps intentionally and perhaps not, the *errors* of the early Italian painters. And certainly the "Brotherhood" got their fair share of scornful contempt, too frequently, unfortunately, undergoing also the mortification of having imputed to them falsity to art, and not infrequently suffering from the stings of personal spite. But if the public, or at least the critical public, was to them a huge and threatening Goliath, their spirits were soon to take new courage, for suddenly a very David came forth as their champion, and Ruskin in the *Times*, in *Modern Painters*, and elsewhere, spoke of their efforts with characteristic dogmatic conviction, insisting on the young painters' rectitude of aim and frequent beauty of accomplishment, and scornfully dismissing, amongst others, such antagonistic assertions as were constantly repeated regarding the absence of perspective in Preraphaelite work, by such counter-blasts as: "There was not a single error in perspective in three out of the four pictures in question. I doubt if, with the exception of the pictures of David Roberts, there was one architectural drawing in perspective on the walls of the Academy. I never met with but two men in my life who knew enough of perspective to draw a Gothic arch in a retiring plane so that its lateral dimensions and curvatures might be calculated to scale from the drawing. Our architects certainly do not, and it was but the other day that, talking to one of the most distinguished amongst them, the author of several valuable works, I

found he did not know how to draw a circle in perspective."*

It is no wonder that Mr. Ruskin, and for that matter many of the public as well, welcomed the conscientious endeavours of the Preraphaelites, when, in the famous art-critic's own words, we are asked to look around at our exhibitions "and behold the 'cattle-pieces,' and 'sea-pieces,' and 'fruit-pieces,' and 'family-pieces,' the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls, and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers, and try to feel what we are, and what we might have been."

If a painter like Fra Angelico on the one hand, like Millais or Holman Hunt on the other, were to paint the same scene—say "Christ healing the sick"—the productions would be very opposite; but because the work of the Fra Angelesque painter would be utterly unreal to fact, however true to the *inner truth*, to the "eternal verities," surely this is no reason why the work of the later artist, true to the facts of costume, country, and time, and at the same time equally true in inspiration, should be inferior? But there are many who would ignore the possibility of an artist combining realism and idealism in his work—or rather, they would say the true idealism includes whatever of realism is necessary. And it must be admitted that, at the best, historic painting or religious painting based on historic fact, can only be approximately true; and it may have been the recognition of this that made such men as Raffaelle paint poor Galilean fishermen in flowing robes, preferring typical representations to historic accuracy. But these are not the times of Raffaelle;

* *Preraphaelitism*, 1851. See also the somewhat too insisted on opinions regarding the value of correct perspective expressed in the Preface to *The Elements of Drawing*.

and owing to the enormous extension of knowledge, not only in regard to our immediate surroundings but also in regard to man's environment in the past, the necessity for truth, or the closest possible approximation to truth, is expected of the latter-day artist. And surely this natural evolution does not militate against an equally natural evolution of imagination? An imaginative idea, a lofty conception, may be not the less great because it be married to relative as well as absolute truth; nor does the imagination that ignores fact necessarily in that very ignoring attain the loftiest height. Is the symbolism of Hunt's *Scapegoat* less effective because the landscape of the picture is true both to nature and to the part of the country wherein happened the historic fact upon which the idea of the picture is based? Would it have been more impressive if the goat had been more ideal in portraiture, and the landscape an English common or Italian plain? Granted equality of imaginative insight, surely it is to be desired that in a picture truth should satisfy the mind as well as the idea affect the spirit; and this even if the truth be only approximate. In painting Cæsar, even if we cannot represent the great statesman-warrior as he seemed to his contemporaries, we would not make an ideal Englishman of him, but would make his representation Italian, Roman, in the first place, and then from the record of historian, carved gem, or impressed coin, complete in detail what would be necessary to realise the mental conception. It is true that a Nemesis pursues the Realist, showing him that after all his ideal of realisation of things past is frequently futile. Yet this is no reason why realism in high art is false: for in what is there no Nemesis? The Idealist will not deny the dreaded following footsteps. A marked instance of this frequent futility in realistic work is

afforded in Holman Hunt's *Christ among the Doctors*, of which Mons. Milsand narrates*—"*Après avoir examiné le tableau une dame juive dit gravement:—'Cela est fort beau, seulement on voit que l'auteur ne connaissait pas le trait distinctif de la race de Juda; il a donné à ses docteurs les pieds plats qui sont de la tribu de Ruben, tandis que les hommes de Juda avaient le cou-de-pied fortment cambré!'*" As M. Milsand remarks, here Mr. Hunt's Preraphaelite accuracy has been his Nemesis; for in endeavouring to be literally true to nature he has only succeeded in obtaining a general Jewish type, and not those differences at once palpable to a people acquainted with their own characteristics.

However, if one must err, it is well to err on the safe side. There are many even now who would echo the Prior and his art-friends in Browning's poem, who rated the young painter-brother for painting from nature, from life, instead of "idealising":—

> "How? what's here?
> Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
> Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
> As much as pea and pea! It's devil's game!
> Your business is not to catch men with show,
> With homage to the perishable clay,
> But lift them over it, ignore it all,
> Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
> . . . . . .
> Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms."

To all such no better reply could be given than Fra Lippo Lippi's own words:—

> "Now, is this sense, I ask?
> A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
> So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further

* *L'Esthétique Anglaise*, par. J. Milsand. 1864.

> And can't fare worse. . . .
> Why can't a painter . . .
> Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
> Both in their order?"

Preraphaelitism is not simply another name for Photography, not what a critic once called it, "a mere heartless reiteration of the model." The absurd accusation was made against the Preraphaelites that their paintings were in reality copied photographs—a charge that Mr. Ruskin effectually dissipated, by challenging any one to produce a Preraphaelite picture by that process. It is strange, now that Preraphaelitism has become a phrase of the past, that the tradition of its synonymity with photography should still exist, for only the slightest knowledge of the processes of the latter is required to show the wide difference there is between it and *art*. I was recently looking at the picture of one of our most eminent sea-painters, and more than once I heard the remark, "that it was too photographic:" well, this painter's method of delineation may or may not be the true way to represent the ever-changing and multiform beauty of the sea, but one thing is certain, that it is beyond any photograph. No painter worthy of the name could paint a picture of the sea or marine coast that would not contain many more facts than any photograph could possibly do, for the limitations of the scientific method are such as to preclude more than perhaps but one truth being given at a time. If mere accumulation of facts were all that were wanted, then doubtless a series of positives would be more valuable than the picture of an artist. Suppose what is desired is a representation of the Dover Cliffs as viewed midway in the Channel, with a fresh south-west breeze blowing through the summer day, what would the painter give us? There would be overhead the deep blue

of mid-heaven, gradated into paler intensity as the eye ranged from the zenith; here and there would move northwards and eastwards (granting the wind-current to be the same at their elevation) fringed drifts of cloud whiter than snow, while down in the south-west great masses of rounded cumuli would rise above the horizon, compact, like moving alps; the sea between the painter and the cliffs would be dazzling with the sun-glare, and the foam of the breaking waves constantly flashing along the glitter of the sparkling blue: here the sea would rival the sky, there it would seem as though dyed with melted amethysts, and farther on where dangerous shallows lurked pale green spaces would stretch along; outward-bound, some huge ocean steamer would pass in the distance, with a thin film of blue smoke issuing from her funnel, and, leaning over with her magnificent cloud of canvas, a great ship from Austral or Pacific ports would overtake a French lugger making for Calais, or a heavily-built coaster bound for London; dotted here and there would be the red sails of the fishing-boats, quite a cloud of them far away on the right, and beyond the red sails the white cliffs, surge-washed at their bases, and at their summits green with young grass. Words can give no idea of these cliffs, however, as they would really seem to the painter—the marvellous blending of colours, the shades of delicate grey deepening to purple, the glow of minute vegetation seeming like patches of orange light, the whitest portions appearing dusky in contrast with the snowy cloud and the glitter of the sea. No painter could transfer this scene to canvas as it appeared to him in its entirety; for in cloud and sea there is an incessant and intricate changefulness defiant alike of painter and poet; but he could give a representation of it which, though not literally true, would yet in another sense *be* true, for nothing that appeared

in his picture would be out of harmony with natural truth so long as it was in itself guiltless of disrelation in its parts.

And now what would the photographer give us of the same scene? In far less time than an artist's briefest sketch would occupy, we would have a representation of the sea, of the clouds, of the ships and fishing craft, of the cliffs and the cliff-formations. But in what condition? We see the cliffs clearly portrayed—even the gorges are recognisable; but to make up for this one truth the rest of the representation is falsehood. The sea is a white blank, waveless, glitterless, unbuoyant; the sky is pale and hueless, with dull, slate-coloured clouds, the whole seeming more as if permeated with wan moonlight than the glory of noonday; the blue film of the steamer's smoke is a dingy grey, and the vessel itself a black smudge, while the red sails of the fishing boats are dark and shadowless. This is what the photograph would be if a representation of the cliffs were specially desired; and the result *as a whole* would be equally unsatisfactory if only the sea and cloud effects had been wished. In this case the photographic copy would be more accurate than the sketch in retaining the actual formation of the clouds, and would also give the delicate shading beautifully, and would moreover represent well the glitter of the sea; but this would be at the sacrifice of the other constituent parts of the picture, for the vessels would be mere blotches and the cliffs irrecognisable as chalk steeps or anything else under the sun. In the first instance, in order to obtain the transference of the solid objects in the distance, the negative would have to be so long exposed to the actinic rays that decomposition would affect the more delicate sea and cloud impressions, resulting in non-gradation, and finally in a mere uniform flatness: and in the

second, so very short a time would the negative have to be exposed in order to obtain true portraitures of passing cloud and sea-glitter that the cliffs and farther vessels would be left quite or almost blank. Of course, a series of photographed facts taken simultaneously, some with the negative exposed but for a very brief space, some for a sufficient time to obtain medium effects, and some so as to adequately represent the most solid objects, would produce a great many truths—in the main, might produce as many truths with more literal accuracy than any painting. But, apart from the impracticableness of this method of obtaining truth from nature, the series of photographs could never really bring before the mental vision of the spectator the scene with anything like the, in one sense, inaccurate and exaggerated delineation of the painter; for though an artist might be able to paint a true and beautiful painting from these photographic facts, it would entail too great an intellectual effort on the part of any one not an artist, unless indeed his or her observant powers were highly developed, both naturally and by ceaseless usage, to comprehend the scene in its fitness of detail; and certainly the work of the landscapist is to convey to the onlooker a speedy impression of some beautiful or truthful natural scene, not to set before him what would involve a certain labour of comprehension. Fifty artists sketching simultaneously from the same scene, each devoting the few minutes available to its ever-changing aspects, would doubtless give us an invaluable series of truthful effects; nevertheless we would get a far better idea of the scene through the literally inaccurate but harmonious rendering in the complete picture of one artist. However commonly we see people purchasing and even preferring photographs of scenery to paintings or water-colours or sketches, the

enormous disadvantages of the artificial compared with the artistic method in rendering recognisable aspects are easily proved. Show a photograph of Snowdon, or Ben Lomond, or Hartfell, without mentioning the mountain in question, and it is doubtful if more than one in half a dozen would really recognise it even if well acquainted with the neighbourhood; but show a sketch in water-colour, or painting in oil, and though the mountain's features may be exaggerated, the foreground of moor or woodland filled in in the studio, and an unusual effect of sunrise, noon-glow, or sunset be over all, yet few who have once seen them would fail at once to recognise Hartfell, Snowdon, or Ben Lomond. And this fact arises from an apparent contradiction, namely, that nature as accurately delineated by photography is *less* truthful in the effect it produces than any good artistic representation—*because* any given natural aspect appeals not only to the sense of sight, to the mere faculties of recognition, but also, and most potently, to the imagination. The imagination does not want mere imitation, it can reduplicate sufficiently itself; what it craves is a powerful impression upon which to employ itself. But there are many who do not realise this—hence, for example, the common dislike to much of our most powerful modern etching. Mr. Hamerton stated the matter concisely in *The Portfolio* (September 1878) in criticising the remarks of an American critic who condemned Turner's Venetian pictures on the ground of their not being imitations of nature:—"*The question is not whether they are close imitations of nature, but whether they have the art power of conveying a profound impression*, and that they unquestionably have." Mr. Hamerton has also ably touched upon this necessity of exaggeration in land or sea-scape art in his interesting volume *Thoughts about Art*, wherein also he

points out what is doubtless as indubitable a fact, an equal necessity in literature dealing, as in fiction and dramatic poetry, with character. And concerning this irrecognisable photographic as compared with artistic representation, let the reader look at any photograph of some mountain with which he is familiar, and observe how dwarfed it seems to him, how devoid of all glory and majesty, how different from the sympathetic and imaginative work (*i.e.* poetic insight, artistic grasp) of the artist. This, of course, is very much more noticeable in the case of photographs of English and Scotch hills than of the Alps, where *height* alone is sufficient to captivate the imagination in portraiture; but, as Wordsworth has pointed out, and as any observant lover of mountain scenery fully realises, mere height in itself is not only what gives rise to emotions of grandeur and majesty, but the shadows of clouds passing overhead, the drifting of mists from crag to crag, the "mountain gloom" and "mountain glory;" therefore when these natural garments of the hills are not represented, or are represented poorly and falsely, the results are unsatisfactory in the extreme, and the hill-range we love is metamorphosed into a dull brown band, the moss-cragged, fir-sloped, ravined, and bouldered majesty of Helvellyn or Schehallion changed to a dark and dreary mass.

The processes of photography being then so different from the method of painters, it can be seen how absurd was the charge made against the Preraphaelites which Mr Ruskin dissipated by his challenge, and how inaccurate is the frequent remark that such and such a painting is merely a coloured photograph. So foreign is both process and result of one from the other that the accusation brought then and still brought against certain artists of painting much of the detail of their pictures *from* photographs instead of directly

from nature (a subsequent modification of the original charge) is quite untenable in the sense of detraction; for supposing an artist desirous of painting an old dismantled castle wall, half covered with ivy, with wall-flowers peeping out of the chinks and crannies, and long grasses waving over ruined buttresses, and only having time or opportunity to make a brief sketch, he would doubtless obtain considerable help from a photograph faithfully reproducing the old ruin with all its wall-flowered interstices and waving grasses, and with the exact configurations of the ivy tendrils; on these data he could regulate his *drawing*, but what would they give him of what is most essential to a painter—colour? He would have to paint the various shades of grey of the castle wall, here green with one kind of moss, here brown with another—the wall-flowers in their brown, rusty, and golden-yellow hues, the grey-green of the grasses, some seeded and almost purple—the light and shade of passing clouds—and the over-arching azure sky. This he would have to do *himself;* in what sense, then, could it be said that he was not a true painter but only a photograph-copyist? "*All* good painting, however literal, however Preraphaelite or topographic, is full of human feeling and emotion. If it has no other feeling in it than love or admiration for the place depicted, that is much already, quite enough to carry the picture out of the range of photography into the regions of art."*

Both Preraphaelite and synthetic painters can agree on one point—viz., that the fountain-head of nature is the only legitimate spring wherefrom to draw inspiration; but this agreement means little when both differ as to methods of interpretation. The analytic, the Preraphaelite artist would

* *Thoughts about Art*, page 63. The essential differences are fully gone into in this instructive volume.

consider fidelity to fact essential to the highest and truest art; the synthetic would consider the individual interpretation and representation of fact superior to mere literalness. There can be no doubt that truth absolute dwells with neither side *in extremis;* the enthusiastic analytic painter is as one who triumphs in the flesh but sins in the spirit—the not less ardent synthetic artist as one who succeeds in the spirit but misses unity because of being insensible to "the value and significance of flesh." Undoubtedly the ideal painter is he who accepts the broad view of things in their relation to surroundings, who sees synthetically, but who at the same time can value and practise detail and elaborate finish when advisable, who can be true to the facts of nature, and at the same time true to the vision of these facts as seen through the veil of individual impression. Now, while it is true the Preraphaelite painters had a tendency to be analytic before all things, *all* had not this tendency in like degree; and, moreover, if Preraphaelitism is to be judged by its chief exponents it will be seen to be primarily a protest, and not in itself a fixed creed. That Rossetti was a Preraphaelite leader is well known, but to say he was a painter who adhered to literality above all things would be absurd—for there has been no artist of our time who had a more marked and wonderful gift of infusing his work with a poetic idea. Even the *Quarterly Review*, in its bitter disparagement of Preraphaelitism, speaks more respectfully of Rossetti. "With him," it says, "however, it was realism no longer, and though it perhaps retained a more archaic treatment and distribution than was usual with other painters, it was never the slave of material, but appealed by mental images rather than by the rigid imitation of facts. . . . The poetic idea, rather than the mechanical execution, is the leading object of the work."

There is a manifest difficulty in avoiding misunderstanding when speaking of Preraphaelitism at this late date, in the fact that in the first place there is now no artistic body of painters who can be separately classed under the term; and, in the second, that the word "Preraphaelite" in public usage has come to signify something derogatory. When at exhibitions visitors see a picture which is simply an absolutely unindividual soulless imitation of nature, or a figure-painting remarkable only for total absence of grace of outline and of harmonic gradation in colour, or an allegoric subject represented in quaint gestures and archaic habiliments, it is at once half-amusedly, half-scornfully passed by as "Preraphaelite." Without any doubt, the amusement is in nine such cases out of ten deserved, but the calling such a picture Preraphaelite is quite a mistake. It is true that travesty often flaunts itself under the guise of its original, but, like the ass who donned the lion's skin, it does not succeed in deceiving any but the ignorant. When Mr. Horatio Grub writes an epic in twelve books on The Deluge, and is praised by the *Ballyrashoon Reporter* or the *Straw-cum-Muddle Weekly Post* as the producer of a poem Miltonic in diction and Dantesque in force, no one but of the same intellectual vigour as Mr. Grub and the *Reporter* and *Post* reviewers is deceived; the professional critic and the lover of poetry equally recognise how utterly out of place such terms of comparison are. It is the same with Preraphaelitism. Those who know what the characteristics of the "Brotherhood" were, both in aim and accomplishment, would not make such a mistake as the visitors just referred to. It is true that amongst these characteristics one of our leading art writers, Mr. Hamerton, specifies an "absolute indifference to grace, and size, and majesty," a

statement which I think would have more truth in it if the word "absolute" were omitted. It was not so much of conscious and voluntary indifference that the "P.R.B." were guilty, as a ruthless naturalness that at times blinded their artistic vision.

One of the most brilliant of the French critics who noticed the Preraphaelite movement in England was M. Prosper Mérimée, who, however, begins with a mistake in his essay on *Les Beaux-Arts en Angleterre*, by attributing the rise of Preraphaelitism to Ruskin—"A la faveur d'un style bizarre parfois jusqu'à l'éxtravagance mais toujours spirituel, il a mis en circulation quelques idées saines et même pratiques"—forgetting that Ruskin was a champion, not an originator. M. Mérimée considers that all the defects of the young school, thoroughly analysed, reduce themselves to one—inexperience: moreover, M. Mérimée fully recognises the benefits almost certain to be the outcome of the protest made by its adherents—stating that one thing remains from the Preraphaelite movement which is probably of greater value than any pictorial achievements it can show—namely, the remodelling of the system of study in England; for at last design is given an important place, which henceforth will give a solid base to artistic education.

Another well-known French critic, M. Eugène Forgues, speaking of the Preraphaelites, *ces fiers revendicateurs de l'independance individuelle*, having found *un evangile dans l'œuvre singulière du paysagiste de Turner, et un prophéte dans la personne de M. J. Ruskin*, styles them *ces* mormons *de la peinture*. Perhaps the best way to state the most evident fault of the P.R.B. at the early stage of the movement would be to say that they, individually more or less, lacked the faculty of selection in details. This want of fit

selection does not, however, necessarily postulate want of poetic feeling, for a strong poetic bias is manifest in most of the early Preraphaelite work; it is simply the unfortunate predominance of a mistaken idea of truth. A lately deceased eminent painter—Mr. Samuel Palmer—made the best definition of natural truth in art when he said—"*Truth in art seems to me to stand at a fixed centre, midway between its two antagonists—Fact and Phantasm.*"

On the other hand, the "Brotherhood" were remarkable for strength of purpose, for intellectual power, high moral fervour, and quite unexampled manipulative skill. Their primary aims were to choose in the first instance high subjects fit for art, and in the next to treat these subjects with the utmost analytic detail and absolute faithfulness to truth; to accept nature as the only reliable guide, and have nothing to do with tradition. What such an ideal means, any artist can realise—the high mental powers requisite, the enormous labour of hand, the keenly observant eye, faculties for the most laborious analysis, intense conviction and marvellous patience. That the Preraphaelites were thus gifted there can now be surely no dispute, and that they fulfilled a purpose and influenced the artistic spirit at large there can equally be little doubt.

The Preraphaelite movement, though in itself mainly devotional or appertaining to what is called high art, was in reality the outcome of the spirit working in art that was already working in the world of thought—it was essentially a sceptical revolt. The investigations of scientists had led to conclusions antagonistic to accepted dogmas, even to Biblical declarations, and the scientific mind was in revolt against the clerical conception of the creation, the flood, the lapse of geologic periods, and so forth; the labours of the literary philosopher had resulted in specula-

tive theories, more or less convincingly backed-up, in direct opposition to orthodox creeds, and these theories, whether religious or social, having first joined hands with the scientific deductions, had permeated all classes; and at last the artistic minds of a select few, catching fire from the sceptical (that is, "examining") spirit abroad, banded together for the purpose of animating what they considered a dying English art by revolting against tradition and bringing all the powers of intellect and laborious manual analysis, as opposed to a slovenly uninspired synthesis, to bear upon whatever they undertook. Looking back, these artist-sceptics saw that the band of earnest truth-loving workers who preceded Raphael resembled them in this, an absolute reliance on nature; and hence they likened themselves to, and called themselves, the *Preraphaelite Brotherhood.*

Their convictions were assured, their energy unique, their enthusiasm intense—therefore it is not to be wondered at that, intellectually dowered as they were, they in several instances turned also to literature not only as to another means of advancing their doctrines, but as itself a somewhat fouled stream they would fain refresh with pure and original springs. And amongst them the intellectual bias was as strongly marked as the artistic, the public proof being that out of the original seven promoters of the movement three have subsequently made their names conspicuous in literature.

A Protestant, a protester, belonging nearly always to an extreme minority, is inevitably disliked—sometimes feared, but always disliked; and though nearly every good law we possess, our individual, our social, our religious, our moral freedom, is owing to protest after protest, the theory of the beneficent action of protestation is only admitted *in* theory,

as only praiseworthy in the past. Yet let the protesting spirit die out of our midst, and the result will be first stagnation, and then retrogression. The craving human spirit, whether manifested in religion, or politics, or the life social, whether in the peasant who craves for his small right to the soil of his fatherland or the artisan who demands manhood suffrage, in the merchant who would fain extend commercial enterprise still further, or in the politician who labours for a republic or a constitution, in the poet, the musician, and the artist—everywhere and with ever-recurring insistence this craving human spirit must ask, ask, ask. It is therefore that Preraphaelitism, even if it possessed no other virtue than that of protestation, served a good purpose in art; and if it be true, as it is, that the term no longer embraces a specific body of artists, none the less the influence of the protest was not impotent, but has borne good and lasting fruit. That, practically, the spirit ich animated the Brotherhood had for its main aim *to protest* is apparent in the fact that after the coherent energy necessary for protestation had been expended, the individualism of each artist showed itself by gliding into separate if parallel grooves, and ultimately, as in the case of Millais, into grooves widely apart.*

* "Of the whilome leaders of Preraphaelitism, Mr. Dante Rossetti is perhaps the only one who combines in just balance the passion for beauty with intellectual subtlety and executive mastery. And the name of this painter brings us from the realistic, didactic part of the sequel of Preraphaelitism . . . to the art whose aim is beauty. . . . Of the original Preraphaelite brethren, Mr. Rossetti, perhaps the chief intellectual force in the movement, is the only one who seems thoroughly to have combined beauty with passion and intellect. An amazing power of realization and extreme splendour of colour are used to embody subjects symbolically suggestive, and pregnant of fanciful allegory."—Professor Sidney Colvin, *English Painters and Painting in* 1867.

The whole subject of Preraphaelitism has been greatly misunderstood, sometimes ludicrously so, as in the case of a "critic" in the *North American Review* (for October 1870), who, referring to the absurd story of the affectation of the P.R.B. in pronouncing the name of their magazine, *The Germ*, with a hard *g*, adds, "*there is nothing in this procedure which is essentially inconsistent with the characteristics of the works which Preraphaelitic art has produced!*" Preraphaelitism, as the principle of a sect, is now a thing of the past: but let it be remembered for its beneficent influence and deeds, as well as for its faults and later backslidings in the hands of disciples who never attained the artistic level of the original Brotherhood. For when the protest was accomplished and had borne fruit, each individual member pursued his own independent impulse; and it was only amongst the so-called disciples that a unanimity of style and choice of subject was perpetuated. Nor should the impression, arising out of so much adverse criticism, be allowed to crystallise, the impression that adherence to Preraphaelite principles almost of necessity postulates sterility of imagination and absence of insight, however great may be the manifestation of mechanical skill—for it is not so. There is nothing in the Preraphaelite principle of "absolute, uncompromising truth to nature, and to nature only" to prevent any artist from accepting in spirit and following up in action the principle set forth in Bacon's beautiful sentence in *On the Advancement of Learning* (Bk. ii.)—"The world being inferior to the soul; by reason whereof, there is agreeable to the spirit of man a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things." For the animating spirit is nature as much as the permeated matter.

Crome, Constable, Turner; Mulready and Etty; Clarkson Stanfield, Copley Fielding, David Roberts; John Philip, Sir Edwin Landseer—and many other famous artists, have done their best to add to the fame of English art since the date of Allan Cunningham's chronicle. English art itself—as has already been stated—has passed through several phases, has experienced the ebb and flow of taste, the growth and culmination of revolution; nor is there any real cause to doubt that it has a future before it that will not be unworthy of its past. There has been too much variety of genius, there have been too vigorous and independent native energies expended already, not to warrant the belief that an artistic history opening with the great names of Hogarth, Reynolds, and Gainsborough, will still have much to record when the not less great names of Rossetti and Millais belong also to an age that is gone.

WILLIAM SHARP.

GREAT ENGLISH PAINTERS.

INTRODUCTION.

Art and Artists in England up to the time of Holbein—Holbein —Sir A. Moro—Oliver—Vandyke—George Jameson—Sir Peter Lely—Sir Godfrey Kneller—Sir James Thornhill.

IT was not without diffidence that I undertook this work; nor have I forgotten the satiric complaint of my countryman—"Will no one write a book on what he understands?" But the hands which hold the pencil are not always willing or able to hold the pen, and artists of literary attainments are either more profitably employed, or prudent enough to avoid an undertaking where there is more certainty of censure than of praise. I may also urge, in extenuation of my temerity, that as art reflects nature, through nature it must be judged.

The history of art, and the lives, and characters, and works of its earlier professors, are scattered through many volumes, and are to be sought for in remote collections, private cabinets, and public galleries. Our paintings are widely diffused, nor are they all contained in the island; and the biographical materials collected by the indiscrim-

inating diligence of Vertue, and brightened here and there by the wit or the sagacity of Walpole, lie strangely heaped together. The other sources of information consist chiefly of the lectures and discourses of the Professors, the accidental notice of the historian or the poet, anecdotes collected by lovers of gossip connected with eminent men, and certain detached biographies, dictated, some by the affection of friends, others by the malevolence of enemies, but most of them drawn up with the hurried indifference of men writing for bread. Of these works some are concise and barren, others overflowing and diffuse, and all are more or less liable to be charged with inaccuracy of criticism, with describing what ought to be, rather than delineating what is.

From materials thus varied and contradictory, it is my wish to extract a clear and concise account of our early art, with the lives and characters of the most eminent British artists. Before the birth of Hogarth, there are many centuries in which we relied wholly on foreign skill. With him, and after him, arose a succession of eminent painters, who have spread the fame of British art far and wide. Of their conduct as men I hope to speak with candour. Of their works I shall express my own sentiments, wherever I have the power of personal examination. Where this is impracticable—for many paintings are in foreign lands, some are shut up in inaccessible galleries, and others have perished through time or accident—I shall follow what are generally esteemed the safest authorities.

Though the lives of men devoted to silent study and secluded labour contain few of those incidents which embellish the biographies of more stirring spirits, yet they are scarcely less alluring and instructive. Their works are at once their actions and their history, and a record of the taste and feeling of the times in which they flourished. We love to know under what circumstances a great work of art was conceived and completed: it is pleasing to follow the vicissitudes of their fortunes whose

genius has charmed us—to sympathise in their anxieties, and to witness their triumph.

Poetry, Painting, Sculpture, and Music are the natural offspring of the heart of man. They are found among the most barbarous nations; they flourish among the most civilised; and springing from nature, and not from necessity or accident, they can never be wholly lost in the most disastrous changes. In this they differ from mere inventions; and, compared with mechanical discoveries, are what a living tree is to a log of wood. It may indeed be said that the tongue of poetry is occasionally silent, and the hand of painting sometimes stayed; but this seems not to affect the ever-living principle which I claim as their characteristic. They are heard and seen again in their season, as the birds and flowers are at the coming of spring; and assert their title to such immortality as the things of earth may claim. It is true that the poetry of barbarous nations is rude, and their attempts at painting uncouth; yet even in these we may recognise the foreshadowings of future excellence, and something of the peculiar character which, in happier days, the genius of the same tribe is to stamp upon worthier productions. The future Scott, or Lawrence, or Chantrey, may be indicated afar off in the barbarous ballads, drawings, or carvings of an early nation. Coarse nature and crude simplicity are the commencement, as elevated nature and elegant simplicity are the consummation, of art.

When the Spaniards invaded the palaces of Chili and Peru, they found them filled with works of art. Cook found considerable beauty of drawing and skill of workmanship in the ornamented weapons and war canoes of the islanders of the South Sea; and in the interior recesses of India, sculptures and paintings, of no common merit, are found in every village. In like manner, when Cæsar landed among the barbarians of Britain, he found them acquainted with arts and arms; and his savage successors, the Saxons, added to unextinguishable ferocity a love of splendour and a rude sense of beauty, still visible in the churches which

they built, and the monuments which they erected to their princes and leaders. All those works are of that kind called ornamental: the graces of true art, the truth of action and the dignity of sentiment, are wanting; and they seem to have been produced by a sort of mechanical process, similar to that which creates figures in arras. Art is, indeed, of slow and gradual growth; like the oak, it is long of growing to maturity and strength. Much knowledge of colour, much skill of hand, much experience in human character, and a deep sense of light and shade, have to be acquired, to enable the pencil to embody the conceptions of genius. The artist has to seek for all this in the accumulated mass of professional knowledge which time has gathered for his instruction: and with his best wisdom, and his happiest fortune, he can only add a little more information to the common stock, for the benefit of his successors. In no country has Painting risen suddenly into eminence. While Poetry takes wing at once, free and unincumbered, her sister is retarded in her ascent by the very mechanism to which she must at last owe at least half her glory. In Britain, Painting was centuries in throwing off the fetters of mere mechanical skill, and in rising into the region of genius. The original spirit of England had appeared in many a noble poem, while the two sister arts were still servilely employed in preserving incredible legends, in taking the likeness of the last saint whom credulity had added to the calendar, and in confounding the acts of the apostles in the darkness of allegory.

Henry the Third, a timid and pious king, founded many cathedrals, and enriched them with sculpture and with painting to an extent and with a skill which merited the commendation of Flaxman. The royal instructions of 1233 are curious, and inform us of the character of art at that remote period, and of the subordinate condition of its professors. In Italy, indeed, as well as in England, an artist was then, and long after, considered as a mere mechanic. He was commonly at once a carver of wood, a maker of figures, a house and heraldry painter, a carpenter, an

upholsterer, and a mason; and sometimes, over and above all this, he was a tailor. Genius had not then come to the aid of art, and paintings and statues were ordered exactly as chairs and tables are now.

Much of the undisciplined talent of the nation was employed by Henry the Third on the building and embellishing of his Cathedrals and palaces: foreign artists, too, were imported; and the manufacture of saints and legends was carried on under the inspection of one William, a Florentine. Those productions take their position in history, and claim the place, if not the merit, of works of taste and talent. At best they were but a kind of religious heraldry: the most beautiful of the virgins and the most dignified of the apostles were rude, clumsy, and ungraceful, with ill-proportioned bodies and most rueful looks.

That the religious paintings of that period were such as I have described them, there is sufficient evidence; that those of a national or domestic kind were similar in character may be safely inferred. There is no account of the nature of those paintings which belonged to the royal Castle of Winchester; but we may conclude that they were not the same as those which aided the priests of the abbeys in explaining religion to an illiterate people. Walpole presumes—he says not on what authority—that when Henry the Third directed his chamber in Winchester to be painted with "the same pictures as before," they were of an historical nature. Historical, or religious, or domestic, the passage referred to by Walpole proves that the art of painting had been introduced early among us; perhaps it even countenances the tradition that it is as old as Bede. Vertue indeed urges, with more nationality than probability, the claim of England to early knowledge in art, and our acquaintance with the mystery of oil colours, before they appeared in Italy. In sculpture considerable talent was shown before this period; but he who proves that equal skill was exhibited in Painting has likewise to prove that the artists were Englishmen—a circumstance contradicting tradition, and unsupported by history. The early

works of art in this island were from the hands of foreigners. It was the interest of Rome to supply us with painters as well as priests, whose mutual talents and mutual zeal might maintain, and extend, and embellish religion. There is no honour surrendered in relinquishing our claims to such productions; the best of them displayed no genius, and exhibited little skill.

The arts seem to have suffered some neglect during the reigns of Edward the First and Second—the chronicles of the church and the state annalist are alike silent. Painting, which requires seclusion and repose, was ill suited to the temper of the conqueror of Wales and Scotland, and was not likely to obtain patronage from a fierce nobility, whose feet were seldom out of the stirrup. All art was neglected save that which embellished armour, and weapons, and military trappings. Elegance was drowned in absurd pomp, and luxury in grotesque extravagance.

Art and knowledge were more in favour during the long reign of Edward the Third. Poetry and learning were of his train; a better taste and a more temperate splendour distinguished the court; the country became rich as well as powerful, and the martial barbarism of the preceding reigns was sobered down into something like elegance. The ladies laid aside those formidable pyramids which made the face seem the centre of the body, and the nobles escaped out of the courtly boots of the first Edward, with the square turned-up toes fastened to the knees by chains of gold. There was everywhere a growing sense of what was becoming and elegant, yet the character of the times was decidedly martial. The actions of the Black Edward in France and Spain gave lustre to the arms of England. A spirit for martial adventure, tempered with high feeling and romantic generosity, spread among the nobles. He was accounted of little note in the land who preferred domestic repose to active war, or who imagined that the best productions of the human mind could be compared to the fame of a well-fought field. Sentiments and feeling such as these ushered in chivalry; to the influence of which we

owe so much, since it brought with it mildness, mercy, high honour and heroic daring, and many of the sweets and amenities of social life.

The art of painting during this reign partook of the warlike spirit of the king; the royal commissions for saints, virgins, and apostles gave way to orders for gilded armour, painted shields, and emblazoned banners—St. Edward was less in request than St. George. No works of art were produced in this period which induce me to lament their loss, and the oblivion which has come over them.

During the civil wars which succeeded, the waste of human life was immense; the contest was fierce and of long continuance; and the destruction of castles and churches involved the treasures of knowledge in ruin, and checked the progress of the elegant arts. In the intervals of repose, indeed, painting was not idle; but her efforts displayed neither originality of thought nor skill of execution. For many reigns art continued to work patiently at its old manufacture. No new paths were explored; nor had the painter any other aim than that of mechanically reproducing the resemblance of that which had preceded him. Those works are the first blind gropings of art after form and colour. The faces are without thought, the limbs without proportion, and the draperies without variety.

Among them there is one which merits notice, *chiefly* because it is one of the earliest of our attempts at historical portraiture which can be authenticated. It is a painting on wood; the figures are less than life, and represent Henry the Fifth and his relations. It measures four feet six inches long, by four feet four inches high, and was in the days of Catholic power the altar-piece of the church of Shene. An angel stands in the centre holding in his hands the expanding coverings of two tents, out of which the king, with three princesses, and the queen, with four princesses, are proceeding to kneel at two altars, where crosses, and sceptres, and books are lying. They wear long and flowing robes, with loose hair, and have crowns on their heads. In the background, St. George appears in the air, combating with the

dragon, while Cleodelinda kneels in prayer beside a lamb. It is not, indeed, quite certain that this curious work was made during the reign of Henry the Fifth, but there can be little doubt of its having been painted as early as that of his son. The monarch was not more fortunate than the apostles of the church; for neither his heroic character, nor the presence of princesses of the blood-royal, could animate the conception, or raise the artist above the usual cold level of barbarism.

Painting, nevertheless, may be said to have advanced a step or two during that period of blood and confusion, and the love of art was gaining a little ground. The demand for saints and legends was sensibly diminishing; a more rational taste in all things was dawning; men's sympathies, national and social, mingled freely in literature, and moderately in art. Portraits were frequently attempted; but they are grim and grotesque—present an image of death rather than of life: and show but glimpses of that feeling and truth of character which distinguish true works of art. But though the draperies seem copied from the winding-sheet rather than from the robe, and the faces from death rather than from life; still it was something to attempt to follow nature, and showed a spirit willing to be freed from the shackles of imitation, and a desire to escape from the thraldom of the church.

At this period the character of an English artist was curiously compounded; he was at once architect, sculptor, carpenter, goldsmith, armourer, jeweller, saddler, tailor, and painter. There is extant, in Dugdale, a curious example of the character of the times, and a scale by which we can measure the public admiration of art. It is a contract between the Earl of Warwick and John Ray, citizen and tailor, London, in which the latter undertakes to execute the emblazonry of the earl's pageant in his situation of ambassador to France. In the tailor's bill, gilded griffins mingle with Virgin Marys; painted streamers for battle or procession with the twelve apostles; and "one coat for his grace's body, lute with fine gold," takes precedence of St. George and the Dragon.

The superstition of the church formed a grotesque union with the frivolities of heraldry and the follies of courtiers and kings. The baron who patronised in his youth the gilded pomps and painted vanities of the court and camp, entertained other feelings as he approached the grave, and at once soothed a timorous conscience, and appeased a rapacious church, by benefactions to abbeys of painted saints and profitable manors. This was the true age of barbaric splendour; mankind wanted the taste to use their wealth wisely, and knew no way to estimate excellence save by price. The quantities of silver and gold, precious stones, and expensive colours, employed in works of art, were immense. Art, unequal to the task of touching the heart by either action or sentiment, appealed to our sense of what is costly, and trusted to her materials. The taste and genius of the Greeks enabled them to use rich materials, and perhaps to use them wisely; but our fathers acted as if all the charm lay in abundance of costly things. We had gilded kings with golden crowns; gilded angels with golden halos; and gilded virgins sitting nursing golden children on golden clouds: the heaven above was gold, and so was the earth beneath.

Yet art, in what was conceived to be a far humbler pursuit, made some atonement for all this. Before, and some time after, the invention of printing, literature was diffused over the land by means of the pen, and a skilful transcriber had more than the reputation which a clever printer enjoys now. Of the volumes thus produced, many were eminently beautiful: a single volume was the subject of a dying bequest, and the works of a favourite author were received as pledges for the repayment of large loans, and even for the faith of treaties. The hand of the painter added greatly to the value of those volumes. The illustration of missals, and of books of chivalry and romance, became a favourite pursuit with the nobles, and a lucrative employment to artists. Illustrations on this scale required a delicate hand which excelled in miniature resemblances, and a fancy in keeping with the genius of the

author. Many of those performances are beautiful. But their beauty is less that of sentiment than of colour. In some of the most remarkable there is vivid richness and delicacy of hue approaching the lustre of oil-painting. They are valuable also for their evidence of the state of art—for the light which they throw on the general love of mankind for literature; and for the information which they indirectly convey concerning the condition of our courts and nobles.

The subjects of those illustrations are very various. They represent the dresses, ceremonies, and portraits of the chief men of the times, while they embody the conceptions of the author. They were richly bound, and clasped with silver or gold, and deposited in painted cabinets and in tapestried rooms. They were exhibited on great occasions, and their embossed sides and embellished leaves were submitted to nobles, and knights, and poets. They were the pride and formed part of the riches of their possessors. The art of printing, and the Reformation, which that art so greatly served, threw those illuminated rarities first into the shade, and afterwards into the fire. The zeal of the reformers was let loose upon the whole progeny of the church of Rome, and wooden saints and gilded missals served to consume one another. The blunt rustics and illiterate nobles, who composed the torrent which swept away the long-established glories of the papal church, confounded the illuminated volumes of poets and philosophers with the superstitious offspring of the Lady of the Seven Hills. Over this havoc there has been much lamentation. I grieve for the literature—for the illuminations my sorrow is more moderate. Into the latter the true genius of art had not ascended, as sap into the tree, to refresh it into life and cover it with beauty. They looked like processions of lay-figures, rather than groups of breathing beings.

The art of tapestry, as well as the art of illuminating books, aided in diffusing a love of painting over the island. It was carried to a high degree of excellence. The earliest account of its appearance in England is during the reign of Henry the Eighth, but there is no reason to doubt that

it was well known and in general esteem much earlier. The traditional account that we were instructed in it by the Saracens, has probably some foundation. The ladies encouraged this manufacture by working at it with their own hands; and the rich aided by purchasing it in vast quantities whenever regular practitioners appeared in the market. It found its way into church and palace, chamber and hall. It served at once to cover and adorn cold and comfortless walls. It added warmth, and, when snow was on the hill and ice in the stream, gave an air of social snugness which has deserted some of our modern mansions.

At first the figures and groups, which rendered this manufacture popular, were copies of favourite paintings; but, as taste improved and skill increased, they showed more of originality in their conceptions, if not more of nature in their forms. They exhibited, in common with all other works of art, the mixed taste of the times—a grotesque union of classical and Hebrew history—of martial life and pastoral repose—of Greek gods and Romish saints. Absurd as such combinations certainly were, and destitute of those beauties of form, and delicate gradations and harmony of colour which distinguish paintings worthily so called—still, when the hall was lighted up, and living faces thronged the floor, the silent inhabitants of the walls would seem, in the eyes of our ancestors, something very splendid. As painting rose in fame, tapestry sunk in estimation. The introduction of a lighter and less massive mode of architecture abridged the space for its accommodation, and by degrees the stiff and fanciful creations of the loom vanished from our walls. The art is now neglected. I am sorry for this, because I cannot think meanly of an art which engaged the heads and hands of the ladies of England, and gave to the tapestried hall of elder days fame little inferior to what now waits on a gallery of paintings.

During the reign of Henry the Seventh, painting rendered Italy the most renowned nation of the earth; but till near his death our island continued, as of old, in gross ignorance

of all that genius, beauty, or grandeur give to art. Now and then the effigy of a prince or an earl was painted—legends were imaged forth for the church—pageants were stitched and daubed for the nobles—stones were quarried for the manufacture of saints—trees cut down in the royal parks to be chipped into apostles—and art, to the ordinary eye, seemed in full employment. But true art there was none.

It would neither be instructive nor amusing to give an account of these lampoons upon human nature which our painters at this period perpetrated under the name of portraits. The likeness of Jane Shore will enable us to form some notion of the existing skill in the art. Tradition and history unite in conferring great personal beauty on this unfortunate woman, and have thus impressed an image of loveliness upon our minds which few painters, perhaps, could realise. The Jane Shore of the artists has no charms such as could have proved fatal to her peace. She possesses none of those attractions—

"Which from the wisest win their best resolves."

Sir Thomas More has given us a glowing account of one of her portraits: it is one of the oldest descriptions of an English work of art, and I shall transcribe the passage:—"Her stature was mean, her hair of a dark yellow, her face round and full, her eyes grey: delicate harmony being betwixt each part's proportion and each proportion's colour; her body fat, white, and smooth; her countenance cheerful, and like to her condition. The picture which I have seen of her was such as she rose out of her bed in the morning, having nothing on but a rich mantle cast under one arm and over her shoulder, and sitting on a chair on which one arm did lie." "Her forehead," adds Walpole, describing her portrait at Eton, "is remarkably large, her mouth and the rest of her features small, her hair of the admired golden colour: a lock of it, if we may believe tradition, is still extant in the collection of the Countess of Cardigan, and is marvellously beautiful, seeming to be powdered with golden dust, without prejudice to its silken delicacy."

We must receive such descriptions with caution. The words of Sir Thomas More are expressive of a portrait beautiful both in conception and execution—a work seemingly beyond the power of our artists, at that period, to produce. He probably thought it excellent, because others with which he compared it were utterly abominable. In a better informed age, John Evelyn, a gentleman of taste and talents, pronounced the heathen atrocities of Verrio, in Windsor Castle, sublime compositions, and their painter the first of mankind. The silenced gods of the ancients infested then, and long after, both our literature and our conversation—and the accomplished Evelyn was pleased to see those divinities embodied, of whom he had read so much.

The commencement of the reign of Henry the Eighth was auspicious for art. The monarch was young, learned, liberal, and gallant—a lover of the ladies, and of all sorts of magnificence. He desired to rival the splendour of foreign courts, and, if money could have accomplished it, he would have surpassed Charles the Fifth and Francis the First in glory. He opened his treasury, and scattered his father's hoards with no sparing hand. Foreign artists began to appear at court, and an enthusiasm for works of talent was awakened. Skilful portrait-painting—the noble art of expressing the sentiments of the soul in the lineaments of the face—rose more and more in estimation, and England seemed in a fair way of having a school of art created in her own spirit. A sore evil, however, accompanied the foreign artists to England—the incurable malady of allegory. This disease in art arose from the misuse of learning—from a desire of cheap adulation, and an utter poverty of fancy. An art was discovered which soothed the pride of learning, and was too mystical for the vulgar—the art of personifying virtues, and employing heathen gods to do the duty of sound divines. Minerva and Venus, and Juno and Jupiter, with all the exploded progeny of Olympus, were seen following in the train of Christian monarchs with high-heeled boots, laced cravats, and three-storied wigs. This bastard offspring of learning swarmed in our palaces and churches.

The pedantry of poets, the mysteries of the church, and the grotesque combinations of heraldry, all united in encouraging this absurd deviation from truth and nature.

Art, in no nation, could well be lower than it was in England when Henry the Eighth succeeded his father, and artists never stood lower, either in the scale of genius or in the estimation of mankind. They were numbered with the common menials of the court; they had their livery suit, their yearly dole, and their weekly wages. Their works, too, were worthy of their condition. I transcribe the following singular memorandum from a book belonging to the Church of St. Mary, in Bristol: the subject referred to is a religious pageant, which seems to have been composed of strange materials, and to have been the united production of all the incorporations.

"Memorandum: That Master Cumings hath delivered: the 4th day of July, in the year of our Lord, 1470, to Mr. Nicholas Bettes, Vicar of Radcliffe, Moses Couteryn, Philip Bartholomew, and John Brown, Procurators of Radcliffe, beforesaid, a new sepulchre, well gilt, and cover thereto; an image of God Almighty rising out of the said sepulchre, with all the ordinance that longeth thereto; that is to say,—Item. A lath, made of timber, and iron work thereto. Item. Thereto longeth heaven, made of timber and stained cloth. Item. Hell, made of timber and iron-work, with devils in number thirteen. Item. Four knights, armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, that is to say, two axes and two spears. Item. Three pair of angels' wings; four angels, made of timber, and well painted. Item. The Father, the crown and visage; the ball with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold. Item. The Holy Ghost coming out of heaven into the sepulchre. Item. Longeth to the angels four chevelers."

The rude simplicity of this curious memorial, and the singular mixture of carving and painting, and chipping and hewing, which the work required, will speak for themselves. Scarcely less ludicrous are the written instructions which Henry the Eighth left for a monument to his own memory.

"The king shall appear on horseback," says this strange document, "of the stature of a goodly man, while over him shall appear the image of God the Father, holding the king's soul in his left hand, and his right hand extended in the act of benediction." The whole was to be in bronze, and much of it was completed, but the parsimony of Elizabeth prevailed over her respect for her father; the work was stopped, and the Puritan parliament sold the whole for £600.

A reformation came which affected religion, literature, art, and the civil and social condition of mankind. This great change arose, not, as has been widely asserted, through the voluptuousness of the king—for that was but as a drop to the torrent; it sprung from the impulse which knowledge had given to the nation, and which nothing could withstand or resist. It is to be regretted that in this salutary change from superstition to wisdom, there were men found rude and savage enough to lift their hands against much that was worthy and valuable. We may doubt if the pictures which were destroyed in the English churches are to be regretted very sorely; but the Reformation struck at the scope and spirit of Italian art. The war which it waged against the superstitious beliefs and idle ceremonies of the old church, included not only her images—(which had been at least abused to idolatrous ends)—but the whole of her religious paintings. Our reformers were purifiers of religion, not patrons of art; nor could they perceive any sort of connection between the rules of belief and moral obedience laid down by our Saviour, and the glowing creations and lively fictions of Italian limners. They perceived, too, that the weak and the ignorant considered even painted altar-pieces as a sort of divinities; so, by one decisive movement, they swept them away, and crushed the religious art of Italy in the very act of filling our churches with its splendid products. Thus did the early reformers; thus the weak Somerset—the politic Elizabeth—and the zealous Puritans of the times of Cromwell. These last completed the crusade by stabling their chargers in the stalls of the cathedrals.

Portraiture survived the general wreck: and Henry the Eighth, who was as vain as he was cruel, protected and sheltered it at court, where, indeed, all was safe except virtue and innocence. He was sensible of the lustre which literature and art can shed upon the throne: he saw the rival kings of France and Spain marching to battle or to negotiation with poets and painters in their trains, and he envied not a little the unattainable brilliancy of their courts. Vanity and ostentation, rather than true love of art, induced him to patronise Hans Holbein, and to fix him in England by kindness and caresses, as well as by a regular pension.

This was the first painter of eminence who came to England, and with him the art in which genius shines may be said to have commenced. His name had already been spread far and wide by the obvious and peculiar beauty of his productions, and by the eloquent praises of Erasmus. Stung with the neglect of his talents at Basle, his native place, and his domestic peace embittered by the froward temper of his wife, he was willing to seek for peace and profit in another land. He accordingly came to England in 1526, in the thirtieth year of his age. This island, at that period, presented a fine field for the display of a creative and original genius. England had dismissed the pageantry of the Romish Church; and—cleared of all preceding works of the pencil, with a taste improved and a mind enlarged, and great wealth—whoever appeared willing to work in her spirit, she was ready to welcome and reward him. The genius of Holbein was too literal and mechanical for this. He was skilful in plain fidelity of resemblance, and could imitate whatever stood before him in living flesh and blood; but he was deficient in imagination —in the rare art of embodying visions of grace and beauty.

He wrought at the court of Henry with a diligence, and, what was better, with a skill new to the country. His works are chiefly portraits, and are all distinguished by truth and by nature. His Sir Thomas More has an air of boldness and vigour, and a look at once serene and acute,

which attest the sincerity of the resemblance; his Anne Boleyn is graceful and volatile; his King Henry bluff and joyous, with jealous eyes and an imperious brow. He was not always so faithful to nature, and knew how to practise the flattery of his profession. He lavished so much beauty on Anne of Cleves, that the king, who had fallen in love with the picture, when the original came to his arms, regarded her with aversion and disgust, exclaimed against the gross flattery of Hans, and declared she was not a woman, but a Flanders mare. This anecdote, however, confirms the painter's claim to fidelity in his other likenesses: he was no habitual flatterer, or Henry would not have given implicit faith to him. On another occasion Holbein went to Flanders to draw the picture of the Duchess-Dowager of Milan—the intended successor to Jane Seymour. She was a princess of equivocal virtue, but of ready wit. "Alas!" said she, "the king of England asks me to be his wife; what answer shall I give to him? I am unfortunate enough to have but one head; had I two, one of them should be at his highness's service."

It is traditionally asserted that the king employed Holbein to paint the portraits of the fairest young ladies in his kingdom, that, in case of the frailty of a queen, he might go to his gallery and select her successor. This story, which I can desire no one to credit, seeing that his majesty had ready access to the originals, is countenanced by an anecdote related by Vermander. One day, while the artist was painting in private the portrait of a favourite lady for the king, a great lord unexpectedly found his way into the chamber. The painter, a brawny, powerful man, and somewhat touchy of temper, threw the intruder downstairs, bolted the door, ran to the king by a private passage, fell on his knees, asked for pardon, and obtained it. In came the courtier, and made his complaint. "By God's splendour," exclaimed the king (this was his customary oath), "you have not to do with Hans, but with me. Of seven peasants I can make seven lords, but I cannot make one Hans Holbein, even out of seven lords."

The works of Holbein were once very numerous in England, but some were destroyed during the great civil wars; others were sold abroad by the Puritan parliament, and many perished when the great palace of Whitehall was burned. The original drawings, eighty-nine in number, which he made of the chief persons of Henry's court, are the greatest curiosity in her present Majesty's collection. Charles the First exchanged them with the Earl of Pembroke for the splendid St. George of Raphael; Pembroke gave them to the Earl of Arundel; they suffered something in the vicissitudes of the civil war, and at last found their way back, it is not remembered how, into the Royal Gallery. "A great part of these drawings," observes Walpole, "are exceedingly fine, and in one respect preferable to the finished pictures, as they are drawn in a bold and free manner. And though they have little more than the outline, being drawn with chalk upon paper stained of a fresh colour, and scarce shaded at all, there is a strength and vivacity in them equal to the most perfect portraits."

Holbein died of the plague in 1554. His works have sometimes an air of stiffness; but they have always the look of truth and life. He painted with great rapidity and ease, wrought with the left hand, and dashed off a portrait at a few sittings. He was gay and joyous, lived freely, and spent his pension of two hundred florins and the money he received for his works with a careless liberality. He had a strong frame, a swarthy, sensual face, a neck like a bull, and an eye unlikely to endure contradiction. It would be unjust to his fame to withhold the information that his talents were not confined to pictures. Like other eminent artists, his mind took a range beyond the brush and the easel. He was an able architect: he modelled and he carved. He was skilful, too, in designing ornaments, and in making drawings for printed books; some of which he is said to have cut himself. Sir Hans Sloane had a book of jewels of his designing which is now in the British Museum. Inigo Jones had another book of his designs

for weapons, hilts, ornaments, scabbards, sword-belts, buttons, hooks, hat-bands, girdles, shoe-clasps, knives, forks, salt-cellars, and vases.

Neither the presence of Holbein, nor the influence of his works, could prevail against the mercantile mode of bargaining for works of art; they continued to be weighed out or measured like other commercial commodities. An artist was looked upon as a manufacturer, and his productions were esteemed according to their extent, and the time consumed in making them. Francis Williamson, of Southwark, and Symon Symonds, of Westminster, glaziers, on the 3rd of May, in the 18th of Henry the Eighth, undertook to "glaze curiously and sufficiently four windows of the upper storey of the church of King's College, Cambridge, of orient colours and imagery, of the story of the Old Law and of the New Law, after the manner and goodness in every point of the King's new chapel at Westminster, also according to the manner of Bernard Flower, glazier, deceased, to be paid after the rate of sixteenpence per foot for the glass." Other engagements of the same nature might be cited, all proving that works of English art were bargained for by measure, and that groups and figures, requiring taste and genius to create, were ordered, like bricks and tiles, by the dozen and the long hundred. "Yet as much," observes Walpole, "as we imagine ourselves arrived at higher perfection in the arts, it would not be easy for a master of a college now to go into St. Margaret's parish or Southwark, and bespeak the roof of such a chapel as that of King's College, and a dozen or two of windows so admirably drawn, and order them to be sent home by such a day, as if he was bespeaking a chequered pavement or a church Bible." It is remarkable that one of the finest of those windows contains the story of Sapphira and Ananias, as told by Raphael in the Cartoons.

Painting maintained its place in popular estimation during the brief and guilty reign of Mary. Sir Antonio Moro, for his portrait of the queen, received from Philip a chain of gold, with the more substantial addition of a

pension of four hundred a-year as painter to the king. Moro followed Philip into Spain, lived in much splendour, and in close intimacy too with the monarch, which was not without its danger. One day, it is said, Philip laid his hand jestingly on Moro's shoulder in the presence of his courtiers, and, as the artist was professionally engaged, he touched the royal hand with a brush dipped in carmine. The courtiers stood aghast at this criminal breach of court etiquette, and Philip himself surveyed for a moment in silence that awful hand, which even ladies knelt to kiss with a serious look. The painter saw his error—he knelt, sued for forgiveness, and obtained it from the king—but not from the Inquisition, who believed, or said, that Moro had got from the English heretics a charm wherewith he bewitched Philip. He retired from a country so dangerous for a man of free manners, and pleased the Duke of Alva so much with some portraits of favourite ladies, that he was made receiver of the revenue of West Flanders, a lucrative appointment—whereon Sir Antonio forthwith threw away his brushes and burnt his easel.

Queen Elizabeth courted wits and coquetted with warriors, but disregarded art and artists. She encouraged nothing that promised to be expensive, and the strong Protestant feeling of the nation, still writhing under the recollection of her sister's severities, excluded madonnas and saints, and even apostles, from the cathedrals. "There is no evidence," says Walpole, in his own sarcastic way, "that Elizabeth had much taste for painting; but she loved pictures of herself. In them she could appear really handsome, and yet, to do the profession justice, they seem to have flattered her the least of all her dependants: there is not a single portrait of her that one can call beautiful. The profusion of ornaments with which they are loaded are marks of her continual fondness for dress, while they entirely exclude all grace, and leave no more room for a painter's genius than if he had been employed to copy an Indian idol totally composed of hands and necklaces. A pale Roman nose, a head of hair loaded with crowns and

powdered with diamonds, a vast ruff, a vaster fardingale, and a bushel of pearls, are the features by which everybody knows at once the pictures of Queen Elizabeth."

Elizabeth was determined to know everything, and wished to appear skilful in matters which she had neither studied, nor could, without study, fairly comprehend. She directed artists, and laid down rules for their productions, not for the advantage of the nation, but for her own. On one occasion, when she sat for her portrait, she ordered it to be painted "with the light coming neither from the right nor from the left, without shadows, in an open garden light;"—a mere conceit—and the conceit, too, of one unacquainted with the principles of the art she presumed to direct. Raleigh informs us that she ordered all pictures of herself, done by unskilful artists, to be collected and burned; and in 1563 she issued a proclamation forbidding all persons, save "especial cunning painters, to draw her likeness." She quarrelled at last with her looking-glass as well as with her painters; during the latter years of her life the maids-of-honour removed mirrors, as they would have removed poison, from the apartments about to be occupied by the virgin queen.

Lucas de Heere, a native of Ghent, a poet, a painter, and a wit, came in this reign to England, where he executed several portraits. He was employed to paint the gallery of the Earl of Lincoln, in which he represented the characters of several nations. When he came to the English, he painted a naked man with a pair of shears and cloths of various colours lying beside him, as a satire on our fickleness in fashions. This thought is borrowed from Andrew Borde, who, to the first chapter of his Induction to Knowledge, prefixed a naked Englishman, accompanied with these lines:—

> "I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
> Musing in mind what raiment I shall wear;
> Now I will wear this, and now I will wear that,
> And now will I wear—I cannot well tell what."

De Heere, proceeding more warily with the queen than

with the nation, depicted her majesty in a rich dress, with crown, sceptre, and globe, coming out of her palace with Juno, Pallas, and Venus as her companions; Juno drops her sceptre, Venus scatters her roses, and Cupid flings away his arrows. The poverty of the invention is as remarkable as the intolerable grossness of the flattery.

The great Earl of Nottingham, whose defeat of the Armada established the throne of his mistress, employed Cornelius Vroom, a native of Haarlem, to draw the designs of his successive victories over the Spaniards, and the whole was wrought in tapestry by Francis Speiring. It is a noble and national work. It is divided into ten battles, and contains the portraits of twenty-seven naval commanders. These portraits have the air of real likenesses; indeed, as the tapestry was wrought while the original persons were living, the artist could not well indulge in imaginary features. The painter had for his drawing one hundred pieces of gold; the arras cost ten pounds one shilling per ell—a high price—and, as it measures seven hundred and eight ells, the whole amounted to upwards of seven thousand pounds. This was a work worthy of the noble House of Howard. James the First repaid the money to the earl, and the crown became proprietor of the work; and the Puritan commonwealth placed it (where it still remains) in the House of Lords—then used by the Commons as a committee-room.

Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, Hilliard and Oliver began to distinguish themselves, and they are probably the earliest natives of this island who have any claim to the name of artists. The former was the son of the Queen's goldsmith, and was allowed to study from the heads of Holbein: the parentage of the latter is unknown, "nor is it of any importance," says Walpole, "for he was a genius, and they transmit more honour by blood than they can receive." Hilliard enjoyed the protection of the court, and became popular; Oliver obtained the patronage of the nation, and merited all which it bestowed. The chief merit, indeed, of Hilliard is, that he helped to form the

taste and discipline the hand of Oliver. The works of the latter are all miniatures; in the estimation of judges they rival those of Holbein, and may be compared with those of Cooper, who, living in a freer age, and studying under Vandyke, scarce compensates by all the boldness of his expression for the severe nature and delicate fidelity of the elder hand. Oliver died in 1617, aged sixty-two years, leaving behind him many works of exquisite skill and beauty.

If the long reign of Elizabeth was inglorious for art, neither will that of James introduce us to names of note, or to works of lasting reputation. James, though an ungainly man and no very gracious monarch, had high qualities: he loved peace, he loved learning, he loved poetry—and he loved art a little. He encouraged first and then pensioned Mytens, a native of the Hague, whose reputation was such, that in the opinion of many it suffered but a slight eclipse on the appearance of Vandyke. This artist was at first employed in portraiture, but he afterwards copied in little many works of the great painters of Italy; nor did the originals, it is said, suffer much either in richness of colour or in beauty of sentiment, so skilful was his pencil. The younger Oliver, too, made himself known about this period by numerous miniature portraits of the chief persons about court. This branch of art was encouraged by the prevailing fashion of wearing miniatures richly set in gold and diamonds; they were no longer concealed in boxes and cabinets of carved ebony, but displayed publicly around the neck, and employed to embellish the velvet dresses of the courtly and the high-born. This harmless vanity, while it encouraged art, exposed its works to the risk of continual accidents.

The English at this period were rich and proud, and sensible of the fame which successful art brings to a nation. But there was a strong feeling entertained against them by foreign princes and foreign artists. They were denounced by the ancient church as incurable heretics; they were dreaded by sea and land; and it was reckoned dangerous to

the soul, and not very safe to the body, to have interchange of civilities with men whom the saints had abandoned, and the Pope consigned to perdition. We were unable, therefore, either to allure over artists of talent, or to become the purchasers of many works of eminence. The general aversion which the mass of the community entertained towards the appearance of paintings in churches began, however, sensibly to abate. Painted windows, altar-pieces, and works of a scriptural character became common as the episcopal church grew strong. The king encouraged their reappearance; the dignitaries of the church sanctioned it; and the people, naturally fond of flashy colours and of pomp and show, made no opposition—though the Puritans called it a bowing of the knee to Baal, and a setting up of the image-worship of the Lady of Babylon.

To the commencement of the reign of Charles the First all lovers of art and literature look with joy, and to the conclusion with sorrow. His spirit was lofty, his discernment great, his taste refined, and his nature generous. The purity of his court and the dignity of his manners were models for other nations. Into his palaces he introduced works of art of the first merit, and to his friendship men of talents and attainments. He filled his cabinets and his galleries with all the works of genius which he could procure in other countries or in his own. He encouraged merit of the first order. Inigo Jones was his architect, and Vandyke was his painter.

Of the contents of King Charles's galleries we have various accounts, but all agreeing that they contained many works of very high talent. Prince Henry, it is true, shares with his brother the merit of patronising painting; and the Earl of Arundel has also the honour of being one of the foremost in forming the national taste, by a judicious assemblage of works of art. But the collection of the prince was small, for he died early; and that of the earl was chiefly, if not wholly, in sculpture; while the gallery of the king was rich in paintings from the best masters. The merit, however, of commencing the royal collection is

due to Henry the Eighth. It contained in his time one hundred and fifty pieces, including miniatures; and when we reflect on the deficiency of public taste, on the foreign wars which that king waged, his contest with the Church of Rome, and his domestic labours in courting, crowning, and uncrowning queens, we cannot but feel that he did much for art. His wardrobe accounts in the British Museum contain the list of his pictures; and though the artists' names are not mentioned, it is easy to trace that many are by Holbein, and pleasing to know that some of them are still in the Royal collection. This curious document confirms the accounts of the domestic splendour and public magnificence of Henry.

The influence of a king of true taste, like Charles, was soon visible in the nation. The foreign countries, who, to Elizabeth and James, had presented necklaces, and jewels, and splendid toys, now propitiated the English court with gifts of the fairest works of art. The states of Holland, instead of ivory puzzles, and cabinets formed after the ingenious pattern known to school-boys by the name of the Walls of Troy, sent Tintorets and Titians. The King of Spain presented the Cain and Abel of John of Bologna, with Titian's Venus del Pardo; and other states courted Charles by gifts of a similar nature, though of less value. He employed skilful painters to copy what he could not purchase. Through the interposition of Rubens he obtained the Cartoons of Raphael, and by the negotiation of Buckingham, the collection of the Duke of Mantua, containing eighty-two pictures, principally by Julio Romano, Titian, and Correggio. These and others rendered the great gallery of Whitehall a place of general attraction; there the king was oftener to be found than in his own apartments; all who loved and encouraged art went there; and so careful was Charles of those favourite works, that, on the occasion of a public banquet, he caused a temporary place of accommodation to be constructed, rather than run any risk of soiling the paintings by the vapour of candles and torches.

This gallery contained in all four hundred and sixty pictures, by thirty-seven different artists. Of these, eleven were by Holbein, eleven by Correggio, sixteen by Julio Romano, ten by Mytens, seven by Parmegiano, nine by Raphael, seven by Rubens, three by Rembrandt, seven by Tintoret, twenty-eight by Titian, sixteen by Vandyke, four by Paul Veronese, and two by Leonardo da Vinci. All these were the private property of the king. The nobles, imitating the example of the throne, purchased largely whenever an opportunity offered. In 1625 Buckingham persuaded Rubens to sell him his own private collection, consisting of thirteen pictures by his own hand, nineteen by Titian, thirteen by Paul Veronese, seventeen by Tintoret, three by Leonardo da Vinci, and three by Raphael.

Charles considered this noble gallery but as the commencement of one much more valuable and magnificent, and he proceeded to collect materials with taste and enthusiasm. By a letter, written with his own hand, he invited, though in vain, Albano into England. Buckingham exhausted all his arts of persuasion to entice over Carlo Marratti; and Venet, a French painter of eminence, was solicited with the same bad success. What money failed to purchase, or patronage to secure, was obtained by chance. The Infanta of Spain sent, as her representative to the English court, the accomplished Rubens. He was welcomed with great honour, and during the remission of public duty was prevailed upon to embellish the Banqueting Room of Whitehall with the Apotheosis of King James—a work distinguished by such freedom and vigour of drawing, and such magnificence of colour, as excited general admiration. To the fame of this great painter nothing can now be added by praise, and as little can be taken from it by censure. The singular ease, vigour, and life which he imparted to all that he touched, the freedom and truth of his drawing, and the glowing and unlaboured excellence of his colouring, have been written upon and talked about in every nation; and the universal eulogy need not be repeated

here.* Rubens remained one year in England, and gave by his works a visible impulse to art. Frigid imitation, and cold and mechanical covering, began to rise into boldness and varied richness; we had no longer forms without freedom, and faces without life. We have at present in Britain eighty-eight paintings by the hand of this great master.

Charles was equally fortunate in obtaining the aid of Vandyke; it came too, as many things of much value come, in the way that may be called accidental. The painter had heard of the honour which art received in England, and arrived in London in 1632, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. He remained a short time quite unnoticed, and retired to the Continent in disgust. The king, then learning what a treasure he had lost, employed Sir Kenelm Digby to soothe him and bring him back; and in this he was successful. Vandyke returned, was admitted into the ranks of the royal painters, and as he wrought with equal rapidity and success, soon gave such evidence of his abilities as delighted the monarch, and consequently captivated the whole court. The queen, then young and lovely, sat to him, and so did her sons; her example was followed by many lords and ladies of the court, and also by the king, who bestowed a knighthood and a pension of two hundred a-year upon the fortunate artist. No portrait painter, indeed, ever merited royal favour more.

Vandyke had studied under Rubens—"Fame," says Walpole, "attributes to his master an envy of which his liberal nature was, I believe, incapable, and makes him advise Vandyke to apply himself chiefly to portraits. If Rubens gave the advice in question, he gave it with reason, not maliciously. Vandyke had a peculiar genius for portraits; his draperies are finished with a minuteness of truth

* From fame thus established the sharp censure with which Fuseli visits the allegories of the school of Rubens can subtract little. There is much bitterness, but there is also not a little of truth in the remarks. "Those allegorical histories are empty representations of themselves, the supporters of nothing but clumsy forms and clumsier conceits; they can only be considered as splendid improprieties, as the substitute for wants which no colour can palliate and no tints supply."

not demanded in historic compositions; besides, his invention was cold and tame; nor does he anywhere seem to have had much idea of the passions and their expression —portraits require none." This seems but a cold acknowledgment of the talents of this great artist, whose portraits are now, and are likely to remain, the wonder of all nations. Of those works, this island alone possesses more than two hundred. He has been equalled in freedom by Reynolds, and surpassed in the fascination of female loveliness by Lawrence, but no one has yet equalled him in manly dignity—in the rare and important gift of endowing his heads with power to think and act. With all his vigour, he has no violent attitudes, no startling postures; all is natural and graceful. Whatever his figures do, they do easily; there is no straining. Man in his noblest form and attitudes was ever present to his fancy; he strikes his subjects clearly and cleverly out; he disdains to retire into the darkness of backgrounds, or to float away the body into a cloud or a vapour. All his men are of robust intellect, for he is a painter of mind more than of velvet or silk; yet he throws a cloak over a cavalier with a grace which few have attained. His ladies are inferior to his men; they seldom equal the fresh innocent loveliness of nature. He remained long in this country; and to his pencil we owe many portraits of the eminent persons who embellished or embroiled the most unfortunate of English reigns.

"Vandyke's pictures," observes Barry, "are evidently painted at once, with sometimes a little retouching, and they are not less remarkable for the truth, beauty, and freshness of the tints, than for the masterly manner of their handling or execution." Of the St. Sebastian and Susanna by the same artist, in the Dusseldorf gallery, Reynolds remarks, "they were done when he was very young; he never afterwards had so brilliant a manner of colouring; it kills every thing near it. Behind are figures on horseback, touched with great spirit. This is Vandyke's first manner, when he imitated Rubens and Titian, which

supposes the sun in the room; in his pictures afterwards he represented common daylight."

The public mind during this period was laden and heaving with another leaven; and that fierce spirit was visibly at work which turned our churches into stables, and levelled the ancient fabric of our monarchy with the dust. Men of talent turned their attention to more important matters than those of art; and I cannot help feeling surprised that a time teeming with the elements of strife and commotion should have produced an artist of such merit as George Jamesone. Of this painter, distinguished by the name of the Scottish Vandyke, less is known than I could wish. He was the son of an architect, and was born at Aberdeen in the year 1586. He went abroad; studied under Rubens in the company of Vandyke; returned to Scotland in 1628; and commenced his professional career at Edinburgh. His earliest works are chiefly painted on panel; he afterwards used fine linen cloth. Having made some successful attempts in landscape and history, he relinquished them for portraiture—a branch of the art which this island has never failed to patronise. He acquired much fame in his day, and was considered after Vandyke the ablest of the scholars of Rubens. His excellence consists in softness and delicacy, and in a manner broad and transparent. His colouring is beautiful; his shades not changed, but helped by varnish; and there is very little appearance of the pencil.

When Charles visited Scotland in 1633, he sat for his portrait to Jamesone, and rewarded him with a diamond ring from his own finger. Many of his portraits are still to be found in the houses of the Scottish nobility and gentry. So well had he caught the manner and spirit of Vandyke, that several of his heads have been imputed to his more famous contemporary. I must not omit to mention that some of his pictures are in the college of his native place, and that "The Sybils," a work of merit, was copied, according to tradition, from two of the beauties of Aberdeen.

The prices which he received for his pictures seem small, even in the swelling numbers of the Scottish currency. In the genealogy of the House of Breadalbane occurs the following singular memorandum—it is dated 1635 :—"Sir Colin Campbell, eighth laird of Glenorchy, gave unto George Jamesone, painter in Edinburgh, for Robert and David Bruces, kings of Scotland, and Charles the First, King of Great Britain, and his majesty's queen, and for nine more of the queens of Scotland, their portraits which are in the hall of Balloch (now Taymouth), the sum of two hundred and threescore pounds. Moreover the said Sir Colin gave to the said George Jamesone for the knight of Lochore's lady, and the first countess of Argyle, and six of the ladies of Glenorchy, their portraits, and the said Sir Colin his own portrait, which are set up in the chamber of Deas at Balloch, one hundred and fourscore pounds."

In spite of all this apparent penury of price, Jamesone died rich. His works still maintain their original reputation; and he goes down as the first native of this island who excelled in works of art as large as life.

An anecdote is related of Charles, which it would be wrong to omit. The king wished to employ Bernini the sculptor, and tried in vain to allure him into England. Not succeeding in this, and still desirous to have one of his works, he employed Vandyke to draw those inimitable profiles and full face now in the royal gallery, to enable the sculptor to make his majesty's bust. Bernini surveyed these materials with an anxious eye, and exclaimed, "Something evil will befall this man; he carries misfortune on his face." Tradition has added, in the same spirit, that a hawk pursued a dove into the sculptor's study, and, rending its victim in the air, sprinkled with its blood the finished bust of King Charles. I have also heard it asserted that stains of blood were still visible on the marble when it was lost in the fire which consumed Whitehall.

It would be instructive to ascertain how far art had resumed its old sway in our churches under the friendly governments of James and Charles—to learn how many windows

were refilled with painted glass, and how many altar-pieces, representing Scripture story, had reappeared—when the fierce Puritans vanquished the chivalry of Charles, and purged anew the sanctuary, to the fullest sense of the proclamations of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth. This cannot now be known.

The fierce war which ensued, and the strange desolation which fell on rank, station, and all established things, was sure to make art a victim. The "pulpit, drum ecclesiastic," assailed the beloved paintings of the monarch, as things vain, frivolous, and sinful; and stigmatised their admirers and abettors as persons possessed with an unclean spirit. The fury of the Parliament fell upon the royal galleries. The presence of art in the land was accounted superfluous; to despise whatever increased external dignity was meritorious; and to lop and prune the blossomed boughs from the stately tree of civil and religious government was not only deemed a merit, but a duty. To strip off, therefore, the exterior magnificence of the old government, was the first act of the new; and they proceeded to sell by common auction the hereditary furniture of the palaces, the heirlooms of the monarchy, and the collection of paintings made under the auspices of their kings. A list of these works of art was made out, imaginary prices attached to each, and the public purpose named—the war in the north and in Ireland—to which the money arising from the sale should be applied. The Puritans affected to despise those productions, because they wished to insult the king's memory; and they desired to sell them, because they had need of the money. But not finding this a sufficient justification, they pretended a fanatic hatred to certain classes of works, and ordered these to be burned—as Henry and Elizabeth had done before. The following is transcribed from the Journals of the House of Commons, of 23rd July 1645. "Ordered, that all such pictures and statues there (York House), as are without any superstition, shall be forthwith sold for the benefit of Ireland and the north. Ordered, that all such pictures there, as have the representa-

tion of the Virgin Mary upon them, shall be forthwith burnt. Ordered, that all such pictures there, as have the representation of the second person in the Trinity upon them, shall be forthwith burnt." "This was a worthy contrast," says Walpole, "to Archbishop Laud, who made a star-chamber business of a man who broke some painted glass in the cathedral at Salisbury. The cause of liberty was then, and is always, the only cause that can excuse a civil war; yet if Laud had not doated on trifles, and the Presbyterians been squeamish about them, I question whether the nobler motives would have had sufficient influence to save us from arbitrary power. They are the slightest objects which make the deepest impression on the people. They seldom fight for the liberty of doing what they have a right to do, but because they are prohibited or enjoined some folly that they have, or have not, a mind to do."

The wild order for the dispersion and destruction of the royal collections was not immediately, nor indeed ever was fully, obeyed. The sales lingered for six or eight years; they were retarded by the unsettled state of the republican government, and by the intrigues of Cromwell. It appears that even the order for the destruction of paintings representing the Virgin and the Saviour was very imperfectly fulfilled. The Puritans, having put them down by a vote as superstitious, allowed not a few of them to escape the flames, and pass silently into the possession of private purchasers whom they were unwilling to disoblige.

They stigmatised art; silenced dramatic actors; shut up the playhouses; and, having conquered and dispersed all their enemies, had full leisure to dispute and quarrel among themselves;—and they did not neglect the opportunity. As they were debating about the booty, a wily and daring spirit interposed, and seized at one grasp the fruits of all their deliberations, prayers, mortifications, plots, and battles. Cromwell, with all his talents, had little feeling for the higher excellency of art. His chief instruction to the painter of his portrait was to remember the warts and moles. He was not insensible, however, that lustre is

proper to a court; and, as soon as he became possessed of absolute power, put an end to all sales of the royal furniture and paintings. For many fine works this order came too late; they had been dispersed beyond recall. Some of the best were bought by the King of Spain, and arrived at Madrid at the same time with the ambassadors of the exiled King—a circumstance which puzzled sorely the Spanish etiquette. Many were sold to persons connected with the old court, many to mere picture-dealers, and some to the more sensible and spirited of the Puritans. The celebrated Colonel Hutchinson was an extensive purchaser; Oliver Cromwell's name appears early in the list of buyers. Some had the misfortune to purchase just when the Lord-General was about to assume sovereign power, and their bargains were declared void! One of these disappointed dealers had the audacity to petition Charles the Second for a restitution of his lot of pictures—the result is not known. Into a dozen galleries Charles had collected upwards of twelve hundred works of art; most of these were dispersed by public sale during the years from 1645 to 1652, and they produced to the republicans thirty-eight thousand pounds. Another fate befell the gallery of the Duke of Buckingham. The pictures were sold privately, to support the second duke during the misery of exile, and, what is worse, they were chiefly purchased by foreigners.

There is no doubt, after all, that very many of the royal pictures remained in England. At the Restoration, when Pepys visited the royal gallery, he declares that he missed few of his old favourites; and we see by the catalogue of James the Second, that the crown was in his time repossessed of many of its ancient paintings. But the unfortunate fire at Whitehall completed what the Puritans did imperfectly, and destroyed a vast number of noble works.

Of the painters who appeared during the Commonwealth little need be said. Painting and sculpture are of slow growth, and seldom thrive amidst wars and convulsions. Men have not peace of mind nor leisure during rebellions and

treasons to cultivate what is elegant; and when a man's head is not safe on his shoulders, it is not likely that he will spend his time sitting for his likeness. James the Second indeed acted otherwise. He was sitting for his portrait, as a present to Pepys, when word was brought to him of the landing of the Prince of Orange. The artist was confounded, and laid down his brush. "Go on, Kneller," said the king, betraying no outward emotion—"go on, and finish your work; I wish not to disappoint my friend Pepys."

For the character of those times and their influence on art, I transcribe, without entirely approving, the words of Walpole. "The arts were in a manner expelled with the royal family from Britain. The magnificence the people have envied they grow to detest; and, mistaking consequences for causes, the first objects of their fury are the palaces of their masters. If religion is thrown into the quarrel, the most innocent are catalogued with sins. This was the case in the contest between Charles and his parliament. As he had blended affection to the sciences with a lust of power, nonsense and ignorance were adopted into the liberties of the subject. Painting became idolatry; monuments were deemed carnal pride, and a venerable cathedral seemed equally contradictory to Magna Charta and the Bible. Learning and wit were construed to be as heathen. What the fury of Henry the Eighth had spared, was condemned by the Puritans. Ruin was their harvest, and they gleaned after the Reformers. Had they countenanced any of the softer arts, what would those arts have represented? How picturesque was the figure of an Anabaptist? But sectaries have no ostensible enjoyments: their pleasures are private, comfortable, and gross. The arts that civilise society are not calculated for men who rise on the ruins of established order."

The noble poetry of Milton, the fine taste and lofty feelings of Colonel Hutchinson, as well as the actions and speeches of many of the great worthies who warred on the side of civil and religious freedom, furnish a sufficient

answer to the exclusive claim, which Walpole sets up for the episcopal church, to all that is witty, and learned, and elegant.

Under the influence of the Restored King, the character of the nation seemed changed as if by sudden enchantment —the people leapt from dreary prayers and interminable sermons to dice, and dance, and debauch. For the stately and chivalrous court of Charles the First—for the martial austerity of Cromwell and his companions, we had profligates, gamblers, paid informers, hired stabbers, and titled strumpets; while over the whole scene of courtly iniquity presided a prince pensioned by the enemies of his country —the most witty and polished of profligates.

The impurities of the court infected literature: it took away the natural grace of innocence and simplicity from our youth; and art also was renewed in a spirit corresponding with the unwholesome state of society. It was no longer grave and devout, as under the first Charles. It was dedicated to the task of recording the features of lordly rakes and courtly wantons. Loose attire and looser looks were demanded now. No one was so ready to comply as Sir Peter Lely, and it must be confessed that no other artist could have brought such skill and talent to the task.

When Cromwell sat to Lely, he said, "I desire you will use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all those roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything as you see me; otherwise I never will pay one farthing for it." When the softer customers of Charles's palace sat to the same painter, they laid his talents under no such restrictions. He seemed to consider himself chief limner at the court of Paphos. No one knew better than he how to paint

"The sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul;"

to imitate the fascinating undulations of female bosoms, or give voluptuous glow and solid softness to youthful flesh and blood. The beauties of Windsor, as they are called,

kindled up old Pepys, who says in his Memoirs, that he called at Mr. Lely's, who was "a mighty proud man and full of state," where he saw the Duchess of Cleveland "sitting in a chair, dressed in white satin;" also Lady Castlemaine, "*a most blessed picture*, of which he was resolved to have a copy." The lapse of a century and a-half has purified the air round those gay and merry madams, and we can look on Lady Castlemaine and her companions as calmly as on the Venus de Medicis. "The bugle eyeball and the cheek of cream" have done with their magic now.

Lely, however, did not wholly dedicate his pencil to the condescending beauties of Charles's court: he has preserved the features of statesmen who contrived to walk upright even in those slippery times: nor did he neglect the men of genius who flourished in his day. He painted Clarendon, Cowley, Butler, Selden, and Otway. He formed a gallery of the works of Vandyke and other eminent artists, which was sold at his death for twenty-six thousand pounds. He maintained the state of a gentleman, and preserved the dignity due to art in his intercourse with the court. Of the numerous works which he painted—for he was a diligent and laborious man—upwards of seventy are still in the island,—portraits of ladies of rank or note, and of men of birth or genius.

To the coming of Kneller some writers have attributed the death of Lely. But he died suddenly; and jealousy and mortification are more slow in their operations. The new artist was indeed a man of talent, but there was nothing of that high order about him which could be supposed capable of sickening the soul, or shortening the life of the other. The works of Kneller are numerous: they are almost exclusively portraits; and over whatever he produced he threw an air of freedom and a hue of nature not unworthy of Vandyke. All the sovereigns of his time, all the noblemen of the court, all the men of genius in the kingdom, and almost all the ladies of rank or of beauty in England, sat for their portraits. When he painted the

head of Louis the Fourteenth, the king asked him what mark of his esteem would be most agreeable to him: the painter answered modestly and genteelly that he should feel honoured if his Majesty would bestow a quarter-of-an-hour upon him, that he might execute a drawing of his face for himself. It was granted. He painted Dryden in his own hair, in plain drapery, holding a laurel, and made him a present of the work. The poet repaid this by an epistle containing encomiums such as few painters deserve :—

> "Such are thy pictures, Kneller! such thy skill,
> That nature seems obedient to thy will,
> Comes out and meets thy pencil in the draught,
> Lives there, and wants but words to speak the thought."

To the incense of Dryden was added that of Pope, Addison, Prior, Tickell, and Steele. No wonder the artist was vain.

But the vanity of Kneller was redeemed by his naïveté and rendered pleasant by his wit. "Dost thou think, man," said he to his tailor, who proposed his son for a pupil, "dost thou think man, I can make thy son a painter? No! God almighty only makes painters." His wit, however, was that of one who had caught the spirit of Charles the Second's wicked court. He once overheard a low fellow cursing himself. "God damn you! indeed!" exclaimed the artist in wonder; "God may damn the Duke of Marlborough, and perhaps Sir Godfrey Kneller; but do you think he will take the trouble of damning such a scoundrel as you?" The servants of his neighbour, Dr. Radcliffe, abused the liberty of a private entrance to the painter's garden, and plucked his flowers. Kneller sent word that he must shut the door up. "Tell him," the doctor peevishly replied, "that he may do anything with it but paint it." "Never mind what he says," retorted Sir Godfrey, "I can take anything from him—but physic."

Kneller was one day conversing about his art, when he gave the following neat reasons for preferring portraiture. "Painters of history," said he, "make the dead live, and do

not begin to live themselves till they are dead. I paint the living, and they make me live!" In a conversation concerning the legitimacy of the unfortunate son of James the Second, some doubts having been expressed by an Oxford doctor, he exclaimed, with much warmth, "His father and mother have sat to me about thirty-six times a-piece, and I know every line and bit of their faces. Mein Gott! I could paint King James *now* by memory. I say the child is so like both, that there is not a feature in his face but what belongs either to father or to mother; this I am sure of, and cannot be mistaken: nay, the nails of his fingers are his mother's, the queen that was. Doctor,—you may be out in your letters, but I cannot be out in my lines."

To four distinguished foreign artists, then, we are indebted for portraits of the most eminent persons who appeared in England during a long course of years. The truth, force, and elegance of many of their works are yet unsurpassed. I am aware that there is a certain air of stiffness in the portraits of Holbein, that several of Vandyke's are unequal to his talents, that Lely is loose and many of his pictures unlike, and that Kneller exhibits much sameness and very little imagination; yet, with all these drawbacks, each has left works which will never be neglected. The Olivers,*

* Concerning some of the portraits of the younger Oliver, Vertue relates the following characteristic story:—"After the Restoration, Charles made many inquiries about the miniatures of Oliver which had been in his father's gallery, and expressed a great desire to obtain them. He could hear no account of them. At last he was told by one Rogers, of Isleworth, that both father and son were dead, but that the son's widow was living at Isleworth, and had many of their works. The king went privately and unknown with Rogers to see them. The widow showed several finished and unfinished, with many of which the king being pleased, asked if she would sell them. She replied she had a mind the king should see them first, and, if he did not purchase them, she would think of disposing of them. The king discovered himself, on which she produced some more pictures which she seldom showed. The king desired her to set her price: she said she did not care to make a price with his majesty, she would leave it to him; but promised to

and James Jamesone, and Cooper, it is true, were native artists; but miniature-painters and mere imitators of Vandyke can have little right to be classed among masters.

A certain kind of painting obtained great reputation in this island during the reigns of the Stuarts, which may be called the architectural. It professed to be the handmaid of architecture; when the mason, and carpenter, and plasterer had done their work, its professors made their appearance, and covered walls and ceilings with mobs of the old divinities—nymphs who represented cities—crowned beldams for nations—and figures, ready ticketed and labelled, answering to the names of virtues. The national love of subjecting all works to a measure-and-value price, which had been disused while art followed nature and dealt in sentiment, was again revived, that these cold mechanical productions might be paid for in the spirit which conceived them.

The chief apostles of this dark faith were two foreigners and one Englishman—Verrio, La Guerre, and Sir James Thornhill. Rubens, indeed, and others, had deviated from nature into this desert track—only to return again to human feelings with a heartier relish. But Thornhill and his companions never deviated into nature. The shepherdesses of Sir Peter Lely were loose in their attire, loose in their looks, and trailed their embroidered robes among the thorns and brambles of their pastoral scenes in a way which made the staid dames of the Puritans blush and look aside. But the mystic nymphs of Thornhill or La Guerre, though evidently spreading

look over her husband's books, and let his majesty know what prices his father, the late king, had paid. The king took away what he liked, and sent Rogers to Mrs. Oliver with the option of a thousand pounds, or an annuity of three hundred a-year for her life. She chose the latter. Some years afterwards it happened that the king's mistresses had begged all or most of these pictures: Mrs. Oliver said, on hearing it, that if she had thought the king would have given them to such strumpets, he never should have had them. This reached the court; her pension was stopped, and she never received it afterwards."

out all their beauties and making the most of their charms, could never move the nerves of a Stoic. It is in vain that a goddess tumbles naked through a whole quarter of the sky. It is astonishing how much and how long these works were admired, and with what ardour men of education and talent praised them.

Thornhill enjoys all the advantage of the praise of Pilkington, and the approbation of Lord Orford. "His genius," says the former, "was well adapted to historical and allegorical compositions. He possessed a fertile and fine invention, and sketched his thoughts with great ease, freedom, and spirit. He was so eminent in many parts of his profession, that he must for ever be ranked among the first painters of his time." . . . "Sir James Thornhill," says Walpole, "a man of much note in his time, who succeeded Verrio, and was the rival of La Guerre in the decorations of our palaces and public buildings, was born at Weymouth, in Dorsetshire; was knighted by George the First, and was elected to represent his native town in Parliament. His chief works were the dome of St. Paul's; an apartment at Hampton Court; the altar-piece of the chapel of All Souls, at Oxford; another for Weymouth, of which he made them a present; the hall at Blenheim; the chapel at Lord Orford's, at Whimpole, in Cambridgeshire; the saloon and other things for Mr. Styles, at More Park, Hertfordshire; and the great hall of Greenwich Hospital. Yet, high as his reputation was, and laborious as his works were, he was far from being generously rewarded for some of them, and for others he found it difficult to obtain the stipulated prices. His demands were contested at Greenwich, and though La Fosse received £2000 for his works at Montague House, and was allowed £500 for his diet besides, Sir James could obtain but forty shillings a square yard for the cupola of St. Paul's, and I think no more for Greenwich.

I now approach the period when native painters of genius and fame make their appearance—men whose works merit minute examination, and whose lives contain matters of lasting interest. It is plain that up to this time no British

artist had arisen capable of leading the way in painting—no one who possessed at once talent for original composition, and skill to render his conceptions permanent. The heart of the country had as yet been but little moved by this art; —and all the splendid colouring, and academic forms, the fixed and approved attitudes and long-established graces, went for nothing, when a man appeared who sought lasting fame—and found it—in moral sentiment, nervous satire, sarcastic humour, and actual English life.

WILLIAM HOGARTH.

William Hogarth was born in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great, London, on the 10th of December 1697. That he was baptised on the 28th of the same month we have the authority of his own manuscripts—the parish registers have been examined for confirmation with fruitless solicitude. He was a descendant of the family of Hogard, Hogart, or Hogarth, of Kirkby-Thore, in the county of Westmoreland;* his father being the youngest of three brothers—the eldest of whom lived and died in the condition of yeoman, on a small hereditary freehold in the vale

* Nichols says, in his earlier years he wrote himself Hogart or Hogard, but in this he is certainly incorrect. His father to his books and his letters added Richard Hogarth, and there is no reason to believe that the son, even for a time, refused to adopt an improvement so graceful. That the name, in London pronunciation, would have the concluding *th* hardened into *t*, there can be little doubt; such is the fate of all northern names with similar terminations. Thus in conversation he was called Hogart, which the following lines, from Swift's "Legion Club," sufficiently prove:—

> "How I want thee, humorous Hogart!
> Thou, I hear, a pleasant rogue art!
> Were but you and I acquainted,
> Every monster should be painted;
> You should try your graving tools
> On this odious group of fools;
> Draw the beasts as I describe them
> From their features while I gibe them.
> Draw them like, for I assure-a
> You'll need no caricatura;
> Draw them so that we may trace
> All the soul in every face."

of Bampton. The second held the plough at Troutbeck, in the same district; and Richard, the youngest, having been educated at the school of St. Bees, carried thence his learning and his health to the market of the great metropolis.

For his small success in London we have the testimony of his son. He arrived, we know not at what period; obtained employment as a corrector of the press; married a woman whose name or kindred no one has mentioned;* kept—it is not known how long—a school in Ship Court, Old Bailey; and having sought in vain for the distinction of an author and the patronage of the powerful, sunk under disappointed hope and incessant labour about the year 1721—leaving one son, WILLIAM, and two daughters, whose names were Ann and Mary.

When the fame of William Hogarth was such as rendered some account of his kindred a matter of public curiosity, it was discovered that his uncle, who lived at Troutbeck, was a rustic poet and satirist, whose rude and witty productions (in the opinion of Adam Walker, the natural philosopher) reformed the manners of the people as much, at least, as the sermons of the clergyman; and that he had written a singular and humorous dramatic poem on the destruction of Troy, which was acted with applause in the open air, among the pastoral hills, by the peasants of Westmoreland. "The wooden horse"—says the philosopher, "Hector dragged by the heels—the fury of Diomed—the flight of Eneas—and the burning of the city, were all represented. I remember not what fairies had to do in all this; but—as I happened to be about three feet high at the time—I personated one of those tiny beings. The stage was a fabric of boards placed about six feet high, on strong posts; the green-room was partitioned off with the same materials, its ceiling was the canopy of heaven, and the boxes, pit, and galleries, were

* Of Mrs. Hogarth, the mother of the painter, it is stated in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for June 11, 1735, that she "died of a fright occasioned by the fire on the 9th instant." For an account of this fire see "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. v. p. 330.

laid out into one by the great Author of Nature, for they were the green slope of a fine hill." When Nichols collected his anecdotes of Hogarth,* he was desirous of tasting the spirit of the rustic dramatist of Westmoreland; and many ballads and satires were gathered and laid before him. George Steevens—a fellow-labourer in the collection—made the following estimate of their merits—"These poems are every way contemptible. Want of grammar, metre, sense, and decency, are their invariable characteristics." But a critic who recognised only humour and burlesque in the works of the immortal nephew, might see nothing but the defects of the Bard of Troutbeck; the man who wrote to excite the laughter of a rustic audience was not likely to be solicitous about grammar, or fastidious about delicacy of phrase.

Respecting his father also inquiries were made; but they were left unanswered till the death of the painter, when the following particulars were found among his memoranda. Richard Hogarth wrote a volume of about four hundred pages as an addition to Littleton's Latin Dictionary, and obtained testimonials to its usefulness and merit "from some of the greatest scholars in England, Scotland, and Ireland." He submitted it to a bookseller with the intention of printing it, but delays took place, and the work was finally withdrawn and laid aside. He then published "Grammar Disputations; or an Examination of the Eight Parts of Speech, by way of Question and Answer, English and Latin, whereby Children in a very little time will learn not only the knowledge of Grammar, but likewise to speak and write Latin, as I have found by

* This curious work was written by two able men, John Nichols and George Steevens; but the former had the sole reputation of the authorship from 1785 till 1810, when in the second edition the different contributions were distinguished. By following the first edition, I have done unintentional wrong to the memory of Nichols. The passages most injurious to Hogarth were written, it appears, by Steevens, who seems to have taken pleasure in mingling his own gall with the milk of his coadjutor's narrative. In this edition [2nd] I have made all the reparation I can for such a very natural mistake.

good experience." These are his own words; the book was printed in 1712—of his success let his son speak. "I saw the difficulties," says William, "under which my father laboured; the many inconveniences he endured from his dependence, living chiefly on his pen; and the cruel treatment he met with from booksellers and printers. I had before my eyes the precarious situation of men of classical education; it was, therefore, conformable to my own wishes that I was taken from school, and served a long apprenticeship to a silver-plate engraver." Walpole is, therefore, mistaken when he says that Hogarth was the son of a low tradesman.

Of the extent of his education we have no account; but, as his father was an enthusiastic scholar, we have no reason to suppose that it was neglected. He has been accused of ignorance; and friends and enemies united in upbraiding him with misspelling his native language. But when knowledge was required he showed no deficiency; some of his memorandums and remarks are well and cleverly written; and much of the misspelling on his plates is evidently intentional, and for the sake of effect. Correct spelling, however, was not then common, and men of literary attainments must share in the reproach. Of his age, when he was apprenticed to Ellis Gamble, an eminent silversmith in Cranbourne Street, there is no notice; he was old enough to observe that the classical knowledge of his father was no protection against sorrow and want. His own reflecting mind influenced him in the choice of a business which brought daily bread, in preference to the precarious honours of scholarship. There were other reasons, which are best related in his own words:—

"As I had naturally a good eye and fondness for drawing, *shows* of all sorts gave me uncommon pleasure when young, and mimickry, common to all children, was remarkable in me. An early access to a neighbouring painter drew my attention from play; and I was, at every possible opportunity, employed in making drawings. I picked up an acquaintance of the same turn, and soon learnt to draw the alphabet with

great correctness. My exercises when at school were more remarkable for the ornaments which adorned them than for the exercise itself. In the former, I soon found that blockheads, with better memories, would soon surpass me: but for the latter I was particularly distinguished."

Nothing better could be done with a boy who thus adorned his school exercises than to make him an artist. But probationary study in painting, or in sculpture, provides neither food nor clothes, and, as Hogarth required both, he was placed in a situation which procured them. The choice he made was a fortunate one. Drawing and engraving made part of his profession; and even shields, crests, supporters, coronets, and ciphers afforded to his young hand the means of gaining facility and precision. Before his apprenticeship expired, however, he had gone far beyond these things; he had conceived a new and happy style of art—rough-hewn his own notions of excellence, and taken a satiric sitting or two from public vice and folly.

"I soon found," he observes, "this business in every respect too limited. The paintings of St. Paul's and Greenwich Hospital, which were at that time going on, ran in my head, and I determined that silver-plate engraving should be followed no longer than necessity obliged me to it. Engraving on copper was at twenty years of age my utmost ambition. To attain this it was necessary that I should learn to draw objects something like nature, instead of the monsters of heraldry, and the common methods of study were much too tedious for one who loved his pleasure and came so late to it; for the time necessary to learn in the usual mode would leave me none to spare for the ordinary enjoyments of life. This led me to considering whether a shorter road than that usually travelled was not to be found. The early part of my life had been employed in a business rather detrimental than advantageous to those branches of the art which I wished to pursue, and have since professed. I had learned by practice to copy with tolerable correctness in the ordinary way, but it occurred

to me that there were many disadvantages attending this method of study, as having faulty originals, etc.; and, even when the pictures or prints to be imitated were by the best masters, it was little more than pouring water out of one vessel into another."

Nichols asserts that the skill and assiduity of Hogarth were, during his term of servitude, of singular assistance to his family and to his master. He was, I doubt not, a dutiful son, and on the whole a faithful servant; but it is seldom that the labours of an apprentice increase a master's fortune. He has the general notion of his business to acquire, his hand to discipline, and his taste to correct; and these things with the cleverest must be the work of time. Hogarth, to be sure, was no common apprentice; yet his account of his own feelings and aspirations yields no support to the supposition of Nichols. He found his profession too limited; he grew weary of the monotonous monsters of heraldry; he loved his pleasure; and loved, too, to think upon the dignity of art and its honours. That a youth so aspiring and ardent always employed his hands for his master's advantage appears doubtful. When released from his indenture, we find him skilful as an engraver, a good draughtsman, with considerable knowledge in colouring. During the acquisition of much of this knowledge, I am afraid that he was not of "singular assistance" to Ellis Gamble. He served his time without any complaint—nor have I heard of any commendation.*

Of those early days I find this brief notice in Smith's "Life of Nollekens," the sculptor. "I have several times heard Mr. Nollekens observe, that he had frequently seen Hogarth, when a young man, saunter round Leicester Fields with his master's sickly child hanging its head over his shoulder." It is more amusing to read such a book than

* A magnificent melon-shaped tea-kettle, engraved with heads in medallion and scrolls by Hogarth, on a circular stand, finely chased with masks, scrolls, and medallions, and dated 1722, was sold at Lord Willoughby de Eresby's sale in 1869. It was from Lord Tenterden's collection.

safe to quote it. Hogarth had ceased to have a master for seventeen years was married to Jane Thornhill, kept his carriage, and was in the full blaze of his reputation when Nollekens was born.

Of his shorthand way of acquiring knowledge we have some account from himself. His dislike of academic instruction, and his natural and proper notion of seeing art through stirring life, are very visible in all he says or writes. Copying other men's works he considered to resemble pouring wine out of one vessel into another; there was no increase of quantity, and the flavour of the vintage was liable to evaporate. He wished to gather in the fruit, press the grapes, and pour out the wine for himself. His words are instructive; he is speaking of his own aspirations after fame, and the unsatisfactory mode of study commonly recommended to students.

"Many reasons led me to wish that I could find the shorter path—fix forms and characters in my mind—and, instead of copying the lines, try to read the language, and, if possible, find the grammar of the art, by bringing into one focus the various observations I had made, and then trying by my power on the canvas how far my plan enabled me to combine and apply them to practice. For this purpose I considered what various ways, and to what different purposes, the memory might be applied; and fell upon one most suitable to my situation and idle disposition; —laying it down first as an axiom, that he who could by any means acquire and retain in his memory perfect ideas of the subjects he meant to draw, would have as clear a knowledge of the figure as a man who can write freely hath of the twenty-five letters of the alphabet, and their infinite combinations."

In this power of picturing in air the characters which composed his productions, Hogarth had great mastery. No man indeed can make a true design who is deficient in pictorial fancy, and wants the vivid imagination which calls up, in moving form and breathing expression, the beings with whom he is to people his canvas. By a succession of

efforts—by slow and repeated touches—by studying a posture here and a character there—glancing one moment at life and another at art—a man may elaborate out a work which shall claim and even obtain a place amongst the productions of genius; but it will want those vivid and natural graces, and that lifelike air, which an imagination containing the picture within itself stamps upon its creations: even though blameless in its separate parts, it will appear defective as a whole.

Possessing this vividness of imagination, Hogarth was ready at a moment to embody his subjects; and by a sagacity all his own, and a spirit of observation which few have equalled, he had ever original characters at command. He seldom copied on the spot the peculiar objects which caught his notice; he committed them to memory, and his memory, accustomed to the task, never failed him. If, however, some singularly fantastic form or *outré* face came in his way, he made a sketch on the nail of his thumb, and carried it home to expand at leisure.

"I had (he writes) one material advantage over my competitors—viz., the early habit I acquired of retaining in my mind's eye, without coldly copying it on the spot, whatever I intended to imitate. Sometimes, but too seldom, I took the life for correcting the parts I had not perfectly enough remembered, and then I transferred them into my own compositions. Instead of burdening the memory with musty rules, or tiring the eye with copying dry or damaged pictures, I have ever found studying from nature the shortest and safest way of obtaining knowledge in my art. A choice of composition was the next thing to be considered, and my constitutional idleness naturally led me to the use of such materials as I had previously collected; and to this I was further induced by thinking that, if properly combined, they might be made the most useful to society in painting, although similar subjects had often failed in writing and preaching."

From a mind so formed, a hand so diligent, and a spirit so observing, it was natural to expect something striking

and original. Of his first attempt at satire, the following story is related by Nichols, who had it from one of Hogarth's fellow-workmen :—One summer Sunday during his apprenticeship, he went with three companions to Highgate, and the weather being warm and the way dusty, they went into a public-house and called for ale. There happened to be other customers in the house, who to free drinking added fierce talking, and a quarrel ensued. One of them, on receiving a blow with the bottom of a quart pot, looked so ludicrously rueful, that Hogarth snatched out a pencil and sketched him as he stood. It was very like and very laughable, and contributed to the restoration of order and good-humour. On another occasion he strolled, with Hayman, the painter, into a cellar, where two women of loose life were quarrelling in their cups. One of them filled her mouth with brandy and spirted it dexterously in the eyes of her antagonist. "See! see!" said Hogarth, taking out his tablets and sketching her—"look at the brimstone's mouth." This virago figures in "Modern Midnight Conversation."

Anecdotes such as these were related in vain to Lord Orford, who was too dainty and delicate to be the biographer of a man accustomed to search in scenes of low sensuality, as well as elsewhere, for the materials of his productions. That a biographer with gold buckles in his shoes should hesitate to follow the steps of one who was no picker of paths, was natural; nor is it matter of surprise that a Horace Walpole should conclude the conversation of a Hogarth to have been gross, and his mind uninformed—Lord Orford considered all men as uninformed who had not received an university education; and all human beings as gross in conversation who were unacquainted with the conventional courtesies of fashionable life.

Ireland, too, in a work full of information concerning our artist's compositions and character, considers him as an unenlightened man, and one who "had not much bias towards what has obtained the name of learning."

If Hogarth showed little bias towards learning, it was

because his powerful mind was directed to studies where the knowledge of actual life in all its varieties was chiefly essential—where an eye for the sarcastic and the ludicrous, and a mind to penetrate motives and weigh character, were worth all the lights of either school or college. But there is no proof that he was a man gross and uninformed, or that he thought lightly of learning. He was indeed a zealous worshipper of knowledge; but he loved to pluck the fruit fresh from the tree with his own hand. Of want of learning no man of Hogarth's pitch of mind will boast; it is the open sesame which clears up the mysteries of ancient lore, and acquaints us with the lofty souls and social sympathies of the great worthies of the world. Our artist had not time for everything; he could not, circumstanced as he was, have been both a scholar of any eminence, and the first man in a new walk of art. But it is unjust to set him down as despising in the abstract what his own great natural genius enabled him to do without.

Ireland having asserted that Hogarth had little bias towards learning, and Walpole that he was gross and ignorant, Nichols brings against him the additional charge of extreme poverty in his earlier years. There is no proof that he suffered under the twofold evil of ignorance and want. That his parents were poor we have his own admission; but he never spoke of absolute indigence. The wages of industry would do the same for him as for others: his food might be plain and his dress coarse—his lodging mean, and little money in his pocket; still he was no object of compassion while the expense of his living was covered by his earnings. "Owing," says Hogarth, "to my desire to qualify myself for engraving on copper, and to the loss which I sustained by piratical copies of some of my earlier and most popular prints, I *could do little more than maintain myself* until I was near thirty; but even then I was a punctual paymaster."

"Being one day," says Nichols, "distressed to raise so trifling a sum as twenty shillings—in order to be revenged of his landlady, who strove to compel him to payment, he

drew her as ugly as possible, and in that single portrait gave marks of the dawn of superior genius. Other authorities intimate, that had such an accident ever happened to Hogarth, he would hardly have failed to talk of it afterwards, as he was always fond of contrasting the necessities of his youth with the affluence of his maturer age. He has been heard to say of himself, "I remember the time when I have gone moping into the city with scarce a shilling, but as soon as I have received ten guineas there for a plate, I have returned home, put on my sword, and sallied out again with all the confidence of a man who had thousands in his pockets."

That young Hogarth held the same contest with fortune for bread, which is the usual lot of unfriended genius, there can be little doubt. Before the world felt his talents, and while he was storing his mind and his portfolio with nature and character, then was the season of fluctuating spirits, rising and falling hopes, churlish landladies, and importunate creditors. When he had conquered all these difficulties, his vanity—and who would not be vain in such circumstances?—loved to dwell on those scenes of labour and privation, and fight over again the battle which ended so honourably to him as a man, and so gloriously to him as an artist. But, even under the worst view which he himself gives of his condition, one can hardly call Hogarth *poor;* he paid all he owed—he had a sword at home, a shilling in his pocket, and an engraving in his hands which raised ten guineas. With a head so clear, hands so clever, and youth and independent feelings on his side, he could not be destitute—and he never was.

With much appearance of accuracy, Ireland releases him from his apprenticeship in 1718, when he was one-and-twenty years old; and Walpole sends him to the academy in St. Martin's Lane, where he "studied drawing from the life, in which he never attained great excellence." Of his habits of diligence in drawing from set figures I have already spoken, and in his own words, he loved rather to study in the wild academy of nature, and to seek in life for

those materials with which neither lectures nor examples could supply him.—If we allow seven years for the term of his apprenticeship, he must have been indentured at fourteen; his father, therefore, may be relieved from the suspicion of inattention to his education—he seems to have instilled as much knowledge into the mind of his only son as was consistent with the boy's years and habits.

The first work of any merit which appeared from the hand of Hogarth was called "The Taste of the Town,"—engraven in 1724. The reigning follies of the day were sharply lashed; and the town was so much taken with this satiric image of itself, that it became profitable to pirate the piece—a fraud which deprived the artist of the fruit of his labour, and compelled him to sell his etchings at any price the piratical printseller chose to give. "'The Taste of the Town' (says Ireland) is now entitled the 'Small Masquerade Ticket, or Burlington Gate,' in which the follies of the town are severely satirised by the representation of multitudes properly habited crowding to the masquerade. The leader of the figures wears a cap and bells, and a garter round his right leg, while before him a satyr holds a purse containing a thousand pounds—a satirical glance at majesty; the kneeling figure, pouring eight thousand pounds at the feet of Cuzzoni, the Italian singer, has been said to resemble Lord Peterborough. Opera, masque, and pantomime are in glory, while the works of our great dramatists are trundled to oblivion on a wheel-barrow. On the summit of Burlington Gate he placed the fashionable artist, William Kent, brandishing his palette and pencils, with Michael Angelo and Raphael for supporters."

At this time it appears that he did not apply himself wholly to original compositions; he had a mother and sisters to assist, and—success in his new and original path being uncertain—continued to make sure of bread by engraving arms and crests. Coats-of-arms, symbols, ciphers, shop-bills, and etchings on bowls and tankards, have been since collected and shown to the world as productions of the early days of Hogarth. That some of these bear an impress

like his I mean not to deny; but all the works which the necessities of genius compel it to perform are not therefore excellent and worthy of being treasured up. The poet wisely says, that

> "Strong necessity supreme is
> 'Mongst sons of men."

All artists are more or less compelled to toil for subsistence; and even the most fortunate often execute commissions alien to their feelings. By these things they should not be judged.

Hogarth soon felt where his strength was to lie; and others began to feel it too. The booksellers employed him to embellish books with cuts and frontispieces. Illustrations of literature were not then very common, nor was the style of their execution in general at all creditable to art. In Mortraye's "Travels" there are fourteen cuts bearing the name of Hogarth; seven more may be found in the "Golden Ass of Apuleius," printed in 1724; in Beaver's "Military Punishments of the Ancients" there are fifteen headpieces; and five frontispieces from the same hand decorate the five volumes of "Cassandra," printed in 1725. He likewise designed and engraved two cuts for "Perseus and Andromeda;" and, what lay more out of his way, two for Milton. The date of the latter is uncertain; nor have I found that they incurred censure or received praise, unless they are included in the following sweeping condemnation of Walpole: "No symptoms of genius," says he, "dawned in those early plates." There is, indeed, little of that peculiar spirit which distinguished his after-works; but they are well worth examination, were it but to learn the lesson which genius reckons ungracious—that no distinction is to be obtained without long study and well-directed labour.

Into the *Hudibras*, published in 1726, a larger portion of his satiric spirit was infused. "This was among the first of his works," observes Walpole, "that marked him as a man above the common; yet in what made him then

noticed, it surprises me now to find so little humour in an undertaking so congenial to his talents." This censure is to be admitted with some abatement. That he has given in the seventeen plates of that performance vivid and accurate images of his witty original, I am not prepared to say. It is seldom that the pencil catches the same inspiration as the pen, and it would be wonderful if it did. There are many bright points and graces in poetry on which painting can find no colours to bestow, which look simple and seem easy to be embodied, but which are too elusive and quicksilvery to take a hue and shape. The poetry of Butler, graphic as it is, and full of images of fun and humour, will always keep its ascendancy, and, in the width of its range, and by the rapidity of its motion, baffle the rivalry of any pencil. It is not where Hogarth has followed, but where he has departed from the poet, that the charm of his embellishments lies. By one or two skilful additions, awakening a similar train of thought and humour, he has increased the graphic glee of his author.

The work was published by subscription, and Allan Ramsay, the poet—a man after Hogarth's own heart, and not unlike him in look—a lover of rough, ready wit, broad humour, and social merriment—subscribed—he was a bookseller as well as a poet—for thirty copies. Twelve of the plates were published separately, and inscribed by the artist to "William Ward, of Great Houghton, Northamptonshire, and Allan Ramsay of Edinburgh." A little praise was then valuable; kindness shown to genius at the commencement of its career is seldom forgotten. A friendly intercourse (of which, however, I can discover no farther traces than some hasty lines by the poet) seems to have been carried on after this between Ramsay and Hogarth. But the poet's son forgot his father's affection, in the feud which arose between the members of the fraternity of painters and Hogarth. The animosities of artists are only surpassed in sharpness and malignity by those of religious sects. Of these designs Hogarth thought so well, that in after-life he often lamented having parted with them.

A patron very different from the poet of the "Gentle Shepherd" appeared in the person of W. Bowles, of the Black Horse in Cornhill, "I have been told," says Nichols, "that he bought many a plate from Hogarth by the weight of the copper, but am only certain that this occurrence happened in a single instance, when the elder Bowles offered, over a bottle, half-a-crown a pound weight for a plate just then completed." This story is an odd one; and yet there can be little doubt of its truth; nor, indeed, was it to every one that the generous Bowles offered such high terms. Major, the engraver, said, that when he was young and desirous to go abroad for improvement, he offered for sale two plates of landscapes, one of them called "Evening," which he had just finished. This was one of his best works. Bowles was much pleased with the performance, and said, as improvement was Mr. Major's object, he would give him in exchange two pieces of plain copper of the same dimensions. This patron had the true English notion of things. Thornhill sold paintings to the government at two guineas the Flemish ell; and Hogarth's engravings were estimated at half-a-crown per pound avoirdupois.

Though Hogarth at this period used both the crayon and the brush, he was still little known except as an engraver. He was looked upon generally as a mere etcher of copper, and his productions were regarded—I copy with shame and anger the unjust and injurious language of Fuseli—"as the chronicle of scandal, and the history-book of the vulgar." If a man like Fuseli could write thus when Hogarth had the fame of many years on his head, we may wonder less at the conduct of one Morris, an upholsterer, who engaged him in 1727 to make a design for tapestry, and afterwards *discovered* to his confusion that he had commissioned an engraver instead of a painter. The work ordered by the upholsterer was a representation of the Element Earth; and in what fashion the task was performed cannot now be known. Morris, however, refused to pay for it, and was sued for the price—twenty pounds for workmanship, and ten pounds for materials.

"I was informed," said the defendant, when the trial came on before the Lord Chief-Justice, "by Mr. Hogarth, that he was skilled in painting, and could execute the design of the Element of the Earth in a workmanlike manner. On learning, however, afterwards that he was an engraver and not a painter, I became uneasy, and sent one of my servants to him, who stated my apprehensions, to which Mr. Hogarth replied that it was certainly a bold and unusual kind of undertaking, and if Mr. Morris did not like it when finished he should not be asked to pay for it. The work was completed and sent home; but my tapestry-workers, who are mostly foreigners, and some of them the finest hands in Europe, and perfect judges of performances of that nature, were all of opinion that it was not finished in a workmanlike manner, and that it was impossible to execute tapestry by it." Such was this classical upholder's defence, and it prevailed.

Patronage by the pound weight, and jury-verdicts which refused to him the name of a painter, suited ill with the haughty heart and sarcastic spirit of Hogarth. A more congenial subject than that suggested by Mr. Morris ere long presented itself, and called forth his proper powers. Bambridge, warden of the Fleet Prison, and Huggins, his predecessor, were accused, in 1729, before the House of Commons, of breaches of trust, extortions, and cruelties, and sent to Newgate. The examination passed in the presence of Hogarth, who sketched the scene in a way which has called the following happy description from the pen of Walpole:—

"The scene is a committee of the Commons; on the table are the instruments of torture. A prisoner in rags and half-starved appears before them; the poor man has a good countenance, which adds to the interest. On the other hand is the inhuman jailer. It is the very figure which Salvator Rosa would have drawn for Iago in the moment of detection. Villainy, fear, and conscience are mixed in yellow and livid upon his countenance; his lips are contracted by tremor, his face advances as eager to lie,

his legs step back as thinking to make his escape, one hand is thrust forward into his bosom, the fingers of the other are catching uncertainly at his button-holes. If this was a portrait, it is the most striking that ever was drawn; if it was not, still finer." The face was that of Bambridge, the rest was the imagination of the artist.

By labouring for the booksellers, and by designing and etching little scenes of town life and folly, Hogarth succeeded in gradually withdrawing himself from the drudgery of his original profession, and in establishing a name with the world for satiric skill and dramatic sketching. But the prices which he obtained were small—so little, indeed, compared with what others received then, and what he was afterwards paid, that he seems ashamed to mention them. He could not disguise from himself that artists of very inferior powers, but of more courtly address, were growing rich by painting portraits of the opulent and the vain, and lived in splendour and affluence. Kent, the architect and painter, seems to have fixed, if he did not merit, Hogarth's peculiar indignation: he was, as we have already seen, the first artist who felt the touch of his satiric hand. This man had painted an altar-piece for St. Clement's Church, sufficiently absurd of itself for all the purposes of ridicule; but Hogarth was not satisfied till he had increased the public merriment by a caricature. There was, indeed, little to do, but it was done effectually. The print raised an universal laugh through the parish, and Gibson, Bishop of London, on his visitation to the church, smiled as he looked on the original, and ordered the churchwardens to remove it. It was taken down accordingly, 7th September 1725, on which a parishioner wrote and printed a congratulatory letter, with a motto from Exodus: "And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and burnt it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the Children of Israel drink of it." There is a puritanic touch in this. No wonder that Hogarth was indignant at the popularity of such a pretender in painting as Kent, who, not contented with the fame of

an architect and ornamental gardener, aspired also to the merits of sculpture, and encumbered Westminster Abbey with some of his absurd conceptions. For his popularity we have the words of Walpole: "He was not only consulted for furniture, as frames of pictures, glasses, tables, chairs, etc., but for plate, for a barge, for a cradle. And so impetuous was fashion, that two great ladies prevailed on him to make designs for their birthday gowns. The one he dressed in a petticoat decorated with columns of the five orders, and the other like a bronze, in a copper-coloured satin, with ornaments of gold."

The unsparing ridicule which the prints of Hogarth threw on this personage was very acceptable to Sir James Thornhill, who, desirous of distinction as an architect, found Kent, in his fourfold capacity of painter, sculptor, architect, and ornamental gardener, a rival that met him at every turn. These satiric compositions are supposed by Ireland to have been something like the price of admission tickets to Sir James Thornhill's academy in St. Martin's Lane. That Hogarth did attend that academy he has himself recorded; but his time was wasted in controversies with his brother students, on the propriety of studying art from paintings or from nature. In the acrimony of disputation he learned to despise the former too much; and declaimed vigorously against borrowed postures and academic groups. "The most original mind (said he), if habituated to these exercises, becomes inoculated with the style of others, and loses the power of stamping a spirit of its own on canvas." On this theme he was fluent and bitter. He was amused, however, with the following retort of one of his brethren. "Hogarth, by the doctrine which you preach and practise, it seems that the only way to draw well is not to draw at all; and I suppose if you wrote on the art of swimming, you would not permit your scholars to go into the water—till they had learned to swim."

He had, however, other motives than an artist's for courting the notice of Thornhill—and frequenting his academy. To what their intimacy amounted previously we know not; but on the 23rd of March 1729 Hogarth, then in his thirty-second year, married Jane, the only daughter of Sir James, aged twenty. He is called in the marriage register of the parish an eminent designer and engraver—and his father-in-law, serjeant-painter and history-painter to the king. The match was neither hasty nor imprudent on the side of the lady; but it was accomplished without the consent of parents, and her father was offended. Thornhill had been, or was then, a member of parliament—was history-painter to the king, and a person of public importance and fame in his day, and conceived that his only daughter might have been wooed and won by a man of higher birth and larger income. He could not foresee his unwelcome son-in-law's future eminence; and he knew his present inability to maintain his wife in the style in which she had been educated. Hogarth was as yet acknowledged by few even as a painter; his works were obviously deficient in the elegant and elaborate drawing recommended by academies, and preached upon by Sir James himself; they wanted harmony of colouring; and, more than all, they bore a stamp and impress of thought materially different from what had found favour with any artist of established reputation. Hapless, no doubt, appeared the aspirations of one who turned obstinately aside from the beaten way—who had the audacity to despise gods and goddesses, regarded allegory as a subject for laughter, and was seeking to make sentiment triumph over mere form, and human nature over conventional beauty. The old man's wrath was of two years' duration; it subsided as all fiery feelings must. He was mollified by the entreaties of his wife, the submissiveness of his daughter, and—above all, we may believe—by the rising reputation of Hogarth.

His high spirit, no doubt, inclined him to resent the conduct of Sir James Thornhill; but his wife's affection and his own good sense subdued the rising feeling, and he

set himself diligently to work, in the hope of being able to maintain his wife in such fashion as became her. He resolved to be wise and prudent; laid aside his satiric designs; took a house in Leicester Fields, and commenced portrait-painter—"the most ill-suited employment," says Walpole, "to a man whose turn was certainly not flattery, nor his talent adapted to look on vanity without a sneer. Yet his facility in catching a likeness, and the method he chose of painting familiar and conversation pieces in small, then a novelty, drew him prodigious business for some time. It did not last, either from his applying to the real bent of his disposition, or from his customers apprehending that a satirist was too formidable a confessor for the devotees of self-love."

To be eminently popular in portrait-painting requires more than mere skill and talent. Hogarth was a man of plain manners, unpolished address, and encumbered with the dangerous reputation of a satirist. He was unacquainted with the art of charming a peer into a patron by putting him into raptures with his own good looks. There were other drawbacks. The calm, contemplative look, the elegance of form without the grace of action, and motionless repose approaching to slumber, were not for him whose strength lay in kindling figures into life and tossing them into business. A collection of isolated lords and ladies, each looking more lazily than the other into vacancy, compared with historical pictures, are as recruits drawn up in line and put into position by the drill-sergeant, compared to soldiers engaged in the tumult of battle, animated with high passions, and determined to do or die.

Hogarth's account of this part of his life is brief and modest. "I married (he says), and commenced painter of small conversation pieces from twelve to fifteen inches high. This, having novelty, succeeded for a few years. But though it gave somewhat more scope for the fancy, it was still but a less kind of drudgery; and as I could not bring myself to act like some of my brethren, and make it a sort of manufactory to be carried on by the help of backgrounds

and drapery painters, it was not sufficiently profitable to pay the expenses my family required." This is a very imperfect account of his labours as a portrait-painter; he seems unwilling to dwell on a department wherein he was not quite successful, and he hastens to the compositions to which he owes his immortality. It would, however, be unjust to his memory to pass over the matter so lightly; for, in truth, some of his portraits are very vigorous performances.

Of his conversation pieces there are many—of his life-size portraits few. Compared with the productions of the great masters of the art of portraiture, those of Hogarth are alike distinguished for their vigorous coarseness and their literal nature. They are less deficient in ease and expression than in those studied airs and graceful affectations by which so many face-makers have become famous. Ladies, accustomed to come from the hands of men practised in professional flattery with the airs of goddesses, and sometimes with the name, would ill endure such a plain-spoken mirror as Hogarth's. Another circumstance must be mentioned. It was the practice of those days to see genius much more willingly and readily in the works of the dead than in those of the living: and perhaps the fashion is not yet gone out. There is no danger of making a mistake in praising a Raphael or Correggio, but there is some in determining the merits of any new production; and great lords—even now-a-days—are frugal of commendation, till the voice of the people gives confidence to their taste. With such men it was the fortune of our portrait-painter to come frequently in contact; disputes ensued; and he was no picker of pleasant words. None of these circumstances were very likely either to augment the number of Hogarth's sitters, or to cheat him into good-humour with an originally uncongenial task.

His portraits of himself are all very clever, and all very like. In one he is accompanied by a bull-dog of the true English breed; and in another he is seated in his study, with his pencil ready, and his eye fixed and intent on a

figure which he is sketching on the canvas. He has a short, good-humoured face, full of health, observation, and sagacity. He treated his own physiognomy as he treated his friends' —seized the character strongly, and left grace and elegance to those who were unable to cope with mind and spirit. On the palette which belongs to the first-named of these two portraits there is drawn a waving line, with the words, "Line of beauty"—a hieroglyphic of which no one could at first divine the meaning. The mystery was afterwards solved in his "Analysis of Beauty," a volume which gained Hogarth few friends and many enemies.

In his family-piece of Mr. and Mrs. Garrick there is more nature and less dignity than was likely to please a pair who, constitutionally vain, had been fed daily and nightly, through a long series of years, with the flatteries of play-writing poets, play-going lords, and player-admiring painters. The great Roscius appeared seated by an ordinary-looking table, with a not very extraordinary-looking wife coming behind him and taking the pen out of his hand. Garrick was dissatisfied with the representation of himself, and said so; the lady said nothing as to herself, but complained that her dear husband looked less noble in art than in nature. Hogarth drew his pencil across David's mouth, and never touched the piece again. The picture was unpaid for at Hogarth's death, and his widow sent it to Mrs. Garrick, unaccompanied by any demand. In Garrick as Richard the Third he was more fortunate. The tyrant starts from his couch in true terror and natural agony. The figure, however, is too muscular and massy.

Hogarth's portrait of Henry Fielding, executed after death from recollection, is remarkable as being the only likeness extant of the prince of English novelists. It has various histories. According to Murphy, Fielding had made many promises to sit to Hogarth, for whose genius he had a high esteem, but died without fulfilling them; a lady accidentally cut a profile with her scissors, which recalled Fielding's face so completely to Hogarth's memory, that he took up the outline, corrected and finished it, and

made a capital likeness. The world is seldom satisfied with a common account of anything that interests it—more especially as a marvellous one is easily manufactured. The following, then, is the second history. Garrick, having dressed himself in a suit of Fielding's clothes, presented himself unexpectedly before the artist, mimicking the step and assuming the look of their deceased friend. Hogarth was much affected at first, but, on recovering, took his pencil and drew the portrait. For those who love a soberer history, the third edition is ready. Mrs. Hogarth, when questioned concerning it, said, that she remembered the affair well; her husband began the picture, and finished it one evening in his own house, and sitting by her side.

Captain Coram, the projector of the Foundling Hospital, sat for his portrait to Hogarth, and it is one of the best he ever painted. There is a natural dignity and great benevolence expressed in a face which, in the original, was rough and forbidding. This worthy man, having laid out his fortune and impaired his health in acts of charity and mercy, was reduced to poverty in his old age. An annuity of a hundred pounds was privately purchased, and when it was presented to him he said, "I did not waste the wealth which I possessed in self-indulgence or vain expense, and am not ashamed to know that in my old age I am poor."

The last which I shall notice of this class of productions is the portrait of the celebrated demagogue, John Wilkes. This singular performance originated in a quarrel with that witty libertine and his associate Churchill, the poet: it immediately followed an article, from the pen of Wilkes, in the "North Briton," which insulted Hogarth as a man and traduced him as an artist. It is so little of a caricature, that Wilkes good-humouredly observes somewhere in his correspondence, "I am growing every day more and more like my portrait by Hogarth." The terrible scourge of the satirist fell bitterly upon the personal and moral deformities of the man. Compared with his chastisement

the hangman's whip is but a proverb, and the pillory a post of honour. He might hope oblivion from the infamy of both; but from Hogarth there was no escape. It was little indeed that the artist had to do, to brand and emblazon him with the vices of his nature; but with how much discrimination that little is done! He took up the correct portrait, which Walpole upbraids him with skulking into a court of law to obtain, and in a few touches the man sunk, and the demon of hypocrisy and sensuality sat in his stead. It is a fiend, and yet it is Wilkes still. It is said that when he had finished this remarkable portrait, the former friendship of Wilkes overcame him, and he threw it into the fire, from which it was saved by the interposition of his wife.

To describe his portraits, or even barely to enumerate them, would take more space than can be spared; but the reader will be pleased to know the extent of his employment and the nature of his engagements. I transcribe the following account from a manuscript list written by the artist, and entitled, "Account taken 1st January 1731 of all the pictures that remain unfinished—half-payment received." He had been then married about a year:—

"A family-piece, consisting of four figures, for Mr. Rich, begun in 1728. An assembly of twenty-five figures, for Lord Castlemain, begun Aug. 28, 1729. Family of four figures, for Mr. Wood, 1728. A conversation of six figures, for Mr. Cork, Nov. 1728. A family of five figures, for Mr. Jones, March, 1730. The committee of the House of Commons, for Sir Arch. Grant, Nov, 5, 1729; the Beggars' Opera, for ditto. A single figure, for Mr. Kirkman, April 18, 1730. A family of nine, for Mr. Vernon, Feb. 27, 1730. Another of two, for Mr. Cooper. Another of five, for the Duke of Montague. Two little pictures, for ditto. Single figure, for Sir Robert Pye, Nov. 18, 1730. Two little pictures, called 'Before and After,' for Mr. Thomson, Dec. 7, 1730. A head, for Mr. Sarmond, Jan. 12, 1730—Pictures bespoke for the present year." Here the memorandum concludes. There is nothing said of the amount of

price, and it has been observed that Hogarth has nowhere acknowledged what money he received for his family-pieces and portraits. For his Garrick as Richard the Third he had £200; but that was later in life, when his fame justified the demand. It is believed that, at the period we are now treating, his prices were extremely low.

I have already mentioned some of the reasons which Hogarth assigned for relinquishing portrait-painting; there were other reasons behind, and these he expressed in a manner sufficiently bitter when, near the close of his career, he looked back on early days, and thought of the impediments which rivalry and affectation had thrown in his way to riches and fame. "For the portrait of Garrick as Richard (says he) I received more than any English artist ever before received for a single portrait, and that too by the sanction of several painters who were consulted about the price. Notwithstanding all this, the current remark was, that portraits were not my province; and I was tempted to abandon the only lucrative branch of the art; for the practice brought the whole nest of phyzmongers on my back, where they buzzed like so many hornets. All those people had their friends, whom they incessantly taught to call my women *harlots*—my 'Essay on Beauty' *borrowed*—and my engraving *contemptible*. This so much disgusted me that I sometimes declared I would never paint another portrait, and frequently refused when applied to; for I found, by mortifying experience, that whoever will succeed in this branch must adopt the mode recommended in Gay's 'Fables,' and make divinities of all who sit to him. Whether or not this childish affectation will ever be done away is a doubtful question; none of those who have attempted to reform it have yet succeeded; nor, unless portrait-painters in general become more honest and their customers less vain, is there much reason to expect they ever will." . . . Hogarth afterwards embodied his satire in a small print, wherein the current of royal favour is set forth as watering the trees of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture: the two latter flourish luxuriantly; but of

the former a single branch, and a low one, alone remains green—and this, by an ingenious contrivance, is shown to represent Portrait.

During this busy period, whilst he was contending with the world for bread, and with his brother artists for reputation in "the only lucrative branch of the art," he was silently collecting materials for those works of a satirical and moral order on which his fame depends. He had not forgotten the precepts which he laid down, to the amusement of his fellow-students, about studying from living nature. To find excellence in art without perfection of form—to make use of human beings such as they moved and breathed before him—and to embody the characters with which observation had peopled his fancy, was the wish of Hogarth; and to this task he now addressed himself with the alacrity of one stung by disappointment, and who is determined to vindicate his confidence in nature and his consciousness of his own strength. The schools in which he delighted to study were the haunts of social freedom—scenes where the chained-up natures of men are let loose by passion, wine, and contradiction. With subjects well suiting the sarcastic talent of the artist London abounded, and neither public vice nor private deformity escaped his satiric strokes.

I have mentioned the displeasure of Sir James Thornhill respecting his daughter's marriage, and that time and the rising fame of his son-in-law softened the old gentleman's feelings *gradually* into kindness and affection. During this period Hogarth designed and etched the first portion of the "Harlot's Progress," so much to the gratification of Lady Thornhill, that she advised her daughter to place it in her father's way. "Accordingly, one morning (says Nichols) Mrs. Hogarth conveyed it secretly into his dining-room. When he rose, he inquired from whence it came, and by whom it was brought. When he was told, he cried out, 'Very well! very well! The man who can make works like this can maintain a wife without a portion.' He designed this remark as an excuse for keeping his purse-

strings close; but soon after became both reconciled and generous to the young people." The reconciliation was sincere. Hogarth was ever the earnest admirer and the ready defender of the conduct and reputation of Sir James Thornhill.

The artist has told with the pen the reasons which induced him to "turn his thoughts to painting and engraving subjects of a modern kind and moral nature—a field not broken up in any country or age." I transcribe his own memorandums:—

"The reasons which induced me to adopt this mode of designing were, that I thought both critics and painters had, in the historical style, quite overlooked that intermediate species of subjects which may be placed between the sublime and the grotesque. I therefore wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to representations on the stage; and further hope that they will be tried by the same test and criticised by the same criterion. Let it be observed, that I mean to speak only of those scenes where the human species are actors, and these I think have not often been delineated in a way of which they are worthy and capable.

"In these compositions, those subjects that will both entertain and inform the mind bid fair to be of the greatest public utility, and must therefore be entitled to rank in the highest class. If the execution is difficult—though that is but a secondary merit—the author has a claim to a higher degree of praise. If this be admitted, comedy in painting, as well as in writing, ought to be allotted the first place, as most capable of all these perfections, though the sublime, as it is called, has been opposed to it. Ocular demonstration will carry more conviction to the mind of a sensible man than all he would find in a thousand volumes, and this has been attempted in the prints I have composed. Let the decision be left to any unprejudiced eye; let the figures in either pictures or prints be considered as players, dressed either for the sublime—for genteel comedy or farce—for high or low life. I have endeavoured to treat

my subjects as a dramatic writer; my picture is my stage, my men and women my players, who, by means of certain actions and gestures, are to exhibit a dumb show."

Those who are not satisfied of the accuracy of Hogarth's notions by his prints and his pictures have little chance of being overcome by the force of his written arguments. I am afraid few will be disposed to rank comedy above tragedy, or common life higher than the heroic. The actions of lofty minds and the pursuits of inspired men will always maintain a higher place in the estimation of mankind than the more picturesque exploits of inferior characters. Entertainment and information are not all that the mind requires at the hand of an artist. We wish to be elevated by contemplating what is noble, to be warmed by the presence of the heroic, and charmed and made happy by the sight of purity and loveliness. We desire to share in the lofty movements of fine minds—to have communion with their images of what is godlike—and to take a part in the raptures of their love and in the ecstasies of all their musings. This is the chief end of high poetry, of high painting, and of high sculpture; and that man misunderstands the true spirit of those arts who seeks to deprive them of a portion of their divinity, and argues that information and entertainment constitute their highest aim. It was well for Hogarth that he painted and engraved far beyond his own notions.

The "Harlot's Progress" was commenced in 1731, and appeared in a series of six plates in 1734. It was received with general approbation. Compliments in verse and prose were poured upon his prints and upon his person; and as money followed fame, his father-in-law was relieved from his fears and Hogarth from his necessities. The boldness of the attempt, the fascinating originality and liveliness of the conception, together with the rough, ready vigour of the engraving, were felt and enjoyed by all. The public saw, with wonder, a series of productions combined into one grand moral and satiric story—exhibiting, in truth, a regular drama, neither wholly serious nor wholly comic, in

which fashionable follies and moral corruptions had their beginning, their middle, and their end. Painters had been employed hitherto in investing ladies of loose reputation with the hues of heaven, and turning their paramours into Adonises; here was one who dipped both in the lake of darkness, and held them up together to the scorn and derision of mankind. Here we had portraits of the vicious and the vile—not the idle occupants of their places, but active in their calling, successful in their shame, and marching steadily and wickedly onwards; while not a porter looked at them in the printsellers' windows without feeling his burden lighter as he named them. Hogarth's fellow artists saw with surprise those monitory and sarcastic creations, which refused to owe any of their attractions to the established graces of the schools, or to the works of any artist new or old. The mixture of the satiric with the solemn—the pathetic with the ludicrous—of simplicity with cunning—and virtue with vice, was but an image of London and of human nature. The actors—some of them at least—might be regarded as the evil spirits of the time, whom a mighty hand had come to exorcise and lay.

The merit of those compositions lies less in their *personal* satire than in their general presentation of the character of a great and lascivious city. Yet the portraitures mark the intrepid spirit of the artist; for some whom he ridiculed were powerful enough to make their resentment be felt. For their resentment he appears to have cared little. One of them—a polished personage who moved in polite circles—still bore the brand of Pope when he was pilloried to everlasting infamy by Hogarth. To reclaim such a hardened offender was beyond satire's art, or even religion's power; to bottle up the viper was the surest way; and there he stands, expecting his fit associate, the procuress, to lead innocence into his toils. The dramatic cast of the whole composition—the march from modesty to folly—from folly to vice—from vice to crime—and from crime to death, contributed less, it is said, to the immediate popularity of the work than the portraits

of Colonel Charteris, Kate Hackabout, Mother Needham, Parson Ford, and—one who should not be confounded with publicans and sinners—Mr. Justice Gonson.*

An anecdote is related by Nichols, which confirms the account of the sudden popularity of the "Harlot's Progress," and the accuracy of the likenesses. "At a Board of Treasury, which was held a day or two after the appearance of the third scene, a copy was shown by one of the lords, as containing, among other excellencies, a striking likeness of Sir John Gonson. It gave universal satisfaction; from the Treasury each lord repaired to the print-shop for a copy of it; and Hogarth rose completely into fame. The anecdote was related by Christopher Tilson, one of the chief clerks in the Treasury, and at that period under-secretary of state." Stories such as this are often told concerning the success of works of genius. The approbation of the Lords of the Treasury was as necessary, in the eyes of one of their clerks, for the fame of the "Harlot's Progress," as their signatures were for the validity and circulation of an official document. What signified genius, life, humour, and moral reprehension, until two or three official underlings clapped their hands at the likeness of Sir John Gonson? The clerks of the treasury, however, are quite mistaken: fame is still the free gift of *the people;* it was so in Hogarth's time, and it will continue to be so.

While Hogarth was etching the "Harlot's Progress," he found leisure to attack a more dangerous antagonist than either Kent, Ford, or Charteris. He had the audacity to satirise Pope. "Pope," says Johnson, "published in 1731 a poem called 'False Taste,' in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth

* Justice Gonson was distinguished for the extravagance of his addresses to the Grand Juries. They were composed, it is said, by Henley of the "Gilt Tub." The daily papers praised them in their own spirit. "Sir John Gonson," says the *Daily Post*, "gave a most incomparable, learned, and fine charge to the Grand Jury."

and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said to mean the Duke of Chandos, a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour. A violent outcry was, therefore, raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to be indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation."

Hogarth's hostility to Pope might have arisen from his connection with Sir James Thornhill, whose uneasiness under the success of Pope's friend Kent, the architect, has already been noticed; or it may have originated in the public odium which the poet incurred by wantonly attacking a kind and benevolent nobleman. Of his motives it is difficult to judge; of the sharpness of his satire there can be but one opinion. He has painted Burlington Gate, with Kent on the summit, in his threefold capacity of painter, sculptor, and architect, flourishing his palette and pencils over the heads of his astonished supporters, Michael Angelo and Raphael. On a scaffold, a little lower down, Pope stands, whitewashing the front; and whilst he makes pillar and pilaster shine, his wet brush besprinkles Lord Chandos, who is passing by. Lord Burlington serves the poet in the condition of a labourer.*

Of all this Pope took no notice, though he resented the "Pictured Shape" from the hand of a very inferior satirist.

* This, though the description reads somewhat alike, is not the same plate as that described at page 53. This is sometimes called "The Man of Taste."

"Either Hogarth's obscurity," says Nichols, "was his protection from the lash of Pope, or perhaps the bard was too prudent to exasperate a painter who had already given such proofs of his ability in satire." The poet was not a person to be easily intimidated, and the name of Hogarth, then in full fame, must have been familiar to him. Pope remained silent, whether to the satisfaction or sorrow of the painter cannot now be ascertained. Much blame had been incurred by the satire on Chandos, and the poet might be unwilling to provoke further discussion or prolong the strife. It is, however, probable that Pope regarded Hogarth as a vulgar caricaturist, beneath his notice.

Thornhill now thought so well of his son-in-law that he sought his aid in some of his ornamental paintings. A task of that kind suited ill with the temper or the talents of Hogarth, nor did it correspond altogether with those theories of composition which he had laid down with so much ardour to his companions, and realised in his own works. But he probably considered the gods, goddesses, and allegorical progeny of his father-in-law as the best of their kind, and wished him to be the sole manufacturer of what he contemptuously called the "sublime." He certainly accompanied Sir James to Headly Park, in Hants, where he furnished a satyr, and some other undistinguished figures, to the story of Zephyrus and Flora.

Hogarth, whose poverty had hitherto detained him in town, was now rich enough to take summer lodgings at Lambeth Terrace; the house which he occupied is still shown, and a vine pointed out which he planted. While residing there he became intimate with the proprietors of

Vauxhall Gardens, and embellished them with designs. He drew the "Four Parts of the Day," which Hayman copied; the two scenes of "Evening" and "Night," with portraits of Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn. For this assistance, which seems to have been gratuitous, the proprietors presented him with a gold ticket of admission for himself and a friend, which he enjoyed long, and his wife after him. Some of those works have perished; nor is this much to be regretted—they had little of the peculiar character which distinguished his other productions.

Among the manuscript notes left by Hogarth, in which he recorded the feelings of his early days, and the notions which he entertained in art, there is a short account of his labours as an historical painter. It cannot be commended for candour; and it exhibits the levity of a man who was so pleased with success of another sort that he thought much too lightly of works which the ablest find some difficulty in performing. "I entertained some thoughts," he writes, "of succeeding in what the puffers in books call the great style of history painting; so that, without having had a stroke of this grand business before, I quitted small portraits and familiar conversations, and with a smile at my own temerity commenced history-painter, and on a great staircase at St. Bartholomew's Hospital painted two Scripture stories—'The Pool of Bethesda' and 'The Good Samaritan'—with figures seven feet high. These I presented to the charity, and thought they might serve as a specimen to show that, were there an inclination in England for encouraging historical pictures, such a first essay might prove the painting them more easy attainable than is generally imagined. But as Religion, the great promoter of this style in other countries, rejected it in England, and I was unwilling to sink into a portrait manufacturer, and still ambitious of being singular, I soon dropped all expectations of advantage from that source, and returned to the pursuit of my former dealings with the public at large."

An inscription, which accompanies these historical paintings in the hospital, intimates that they were finished and presented by our artist in 1736. Of their character much need not be said; it is evident that Hogarth himself never considered them as the fairest fruits of his fancy, and others have treated them with still less respect. For historical and poetical subjects he seems to have possessed strong power; but he wanted discipline of hand, and that patient laboriousness of study without which works of a high order are seldom achieved. He had a keen sense of character, eminent skill in grouping, and facility perhaps unrivalled in giving to his numerous figures one combined, clear, and consistent employment; but of the art of elevating and ennobling he seems to have known little, and to have had no desire of learning more. The grandeur of a Macbeth or a Hamlet was not included in the theory which he was resolved to follow; it took in Thersites, but left out Agamemnon. He could hold the mirror up to folly, show vice her visage till she writhed with anguish, and paint lasciviousness as disgusting as one of Swift's Yahoos; but the serene beauty of innocence, and the dignity of tragic emotion, were things beyond his power, or at least beyond his ambition.

"He was ambitious (says Walpole) of distinguishing himself as a painter of history, but the burlesque turn of his mind mixed itself with the most serious subjects. In his 'Danaë,' the old nurse tries a coin of the golden shower with her teeth—to see if it is true gold; in the Pool of Bethesda,' a servant of a rich ulcerated lady beats back a poor man who sought the same celestial emedy Both circumstances are justly thought—but rather too ludicrous. It is a much more capital fault that 'Danaë herself is a mere nymph of Drury. He seems to have conceived no higher idea of beauty."

That Hogarth had ever dreamt of imitating the severity of the Italian school there is no reason to believe. He saw the actions of mankind under another aspect—he painted under another planetary influence than that of the saints,

and was not unwilling to mingle a little of a gayer feeling with the sincerity of the old strain. The story of "Danaë" cannot well be told with a serious face, nor is it proper to paint it gravely—and Hogarth hung mirth and sobriety in a balance. The want of personal beauty in the lady is a more material blemish. The employment of the servant at the "Pool of Bethesda" is satirical, but not ludicrous. The conception of those works is their chief merit; nor are they necessarily unhistoric because they differ in character from works called historical. Satire and humour come within the meaning of history; they mingle in man's loftiest moods; they are present in epic poetry and in tragedy, and can only be required to keep away when sacred things are revealed and made visible. In all our poetry which is not devoted expressly to devotion, there are strokes of humour and passages of a gay and satiric kind; and, what is more to the purpose, they mingle with the most tragic occurrences of life. We ought, therefore, to be pleased with an artist who works so much in the spirit of nature and poetry.

The sarcasm and humour of his ordinary compositions infected, in the estimation of the world, the whole of his performances. Few seemed disposed to recognise, in any of his works, a higher aim than that of raising a laugh. Somerville, the poet, inscribed the "Rural Games" to Hogarth in these words:—"Permit me, Sir, to make choice of you for my patron, being the greatest master in the burlesque way. Your province is the town—leave me a small outride in the country, and I shall be content." Fielding had another feeling of the artist's merits:—"He who would call the ingenious Hogarth a burlesque painter, would, in my opinion, do him very little honour; for sure it is much easier, much less the subject of admiration, to paint a man with a nose, or any other feature, of a preposterous size, or to expose him in some absurd or monstrous attitude, than to express the affections of man on canvas. It hath been thought a vast commendation of a painter to say his figures seem to breathe; but surely it

is a much greater and nobler applause that they appear to think." The "Harlot's Progress" is no burlesque production nor jesting matter—it exhibits, in the midst of humour and satire, a moral pathos which saddens the heart.

In 1734 Hogarth lost his father-in-law, of whose talents he thus wrote in the Obituary of Sylvanus Urban:—"Sir James Thornhill, Knight, the greatest history-painter this kingdom ever produced: witness his elaborate works in Greenwich Hospital, the cupola of St. Paul's, the altar-pieces of All Souls' College in Oxford, and the church in Weymouth, where he was born. He was not only by patents appointed history-painter to their late and present majesties, but serjeant-painter, by which he was to paint all the royal palaces, coaches, barges, and the royal navy. This late patent he surrendered in favour of his only son John. He left no other issue but one daughter, now the wife of Mr. William Hogarth, admired for his curious miniature conversation pieces." In the following year he lost his mother. She lived near him in Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane, and her death was hastened by an alarm which she received from a fire in the neighbourhood, kindled by a woman in revenge for having received notice to quit her house. "I shall make," said this incendiary, "such a bonfire on the twentieth of June as will warm all my rascally neighbours." And she kept her word. Mrs. Hogarth lived to have her maternal solicitude rewarded by the eminence of her only son. Few mothers enjoy such honour, for few sons obtain such reputation. Her death was thus noticed in the newspapers:—"June 11th, 1735, died Mrs. Hogarth, mother of the celebrated painter"—a date which fails to correspond with the threat of her neighbour. She left her daughters—who lived unmarried—in a ready-made clothes shop at Little Britain Gate, where they were aided by their brother, who loved them very tenderly.

The "Harlot's Progress" was followed by the "Rake's Progress," in a series of eight scenes, each complete in itself, and all uniting in relating a domestic history in a way at

once natural, comic, satiric, and serious. The folly of man, however, was not so warmly welcomed by the public as that of woman had been. Hogarth was now his own dangerous rival. No one preceded, and no one had followed him, in his course; and the new work was measured less by its actual merits than by those of the "Harlot's Progress," and the surprise and admiration which that entirely novel performance had excited. The gloss of novelty was dimmed, the fine edge of curiosity was blunted, and criticism was no longer to be surprised into approbation; it had leisure to be captious and seek for faults—nor was it slow in finding them. "The 'Rake's Progress,'" says Walpole, "though perhaps superior to the 'Harlot's Progress,' had not so much success as the other, from want of novelty; nor is the print of the 'Arrest' equal to the others." The inferiority of the "Arrest" was felt by Hogarth himself; he tried to improve it, but without success. He added figures; but neither heightened the action, nor brightened the sentiment.

The boldness, originality, and happy handling of those productions made them general favourites, and by the aid of the graver they were circulated over the island with the celerity of a telegraphic despatch. For the "Harlot's Progress" no less than 1,200 subscribers' names were entered on the artist's books. Theophilus Cibber converted it into a pantomime; it also appeared on the stage in the shape of a ballad opera, under the name of "The Jew Decoyed; or, a Harlot's Progress." Fan-mounts were likewise made containing miniature representations of all the six plates; these were usually printed off with red ink, three compartments on one side, and as many on the other. Of the "Rake's Progress" the success is less distinctly stated, but it must have been great; for it was satisfactory to the artist himself, who was now confirmed in his own notions of what was fittest for art. In those fourteen plates are contained the stories of two erring creatures who run their own separate careers; and never did dramatist or painter read two such sharp, satiric, and biting lessons to

mankind. In the first series a young woman is conducted from innocence through six scenes of woe, wickedness, and guilt; coming pure from the country into the pollution of London, she is decoyed and deceived; she deceives in her turn; rises to guilty splendour, to sink in more guilty woe; and finally perishes amid wretches as guilty and as miserable as herself. In the other series of engravings a young man steps unexpectedly from poverty to fortune, from rustic dependence to lordly wealth, by heiring a sordid miser, of whose den and hoards the artist introduces him in the act of taking possession. He despises and deserts the woman whom he had wooed and vowed to marry; starts on a wild career of extravagance, dissipation, and folly; is beset and swindled by speculators of all kinds; parades through various haunts of sin and of splendour; till, with a fortune dissipated, a constitution ruined, his fame blighted, and his mind touched, he is left raving mad in Bedlam. Mirth and woe, humour and seriousness, a brilliant rise and a dark ending, are seen often together in this world, and the painter has not separated them. The brief and agitated careers of two fellow-mortals are represented; the truth of nature is closely observed; a series of actions all conducive to the catastrophe are exhibited, and were they arranged for the stage, and personated by first-rate actors, hardly could the impression be more vivid or the moral strengthened. Nor has the painter sought to win and move us by beauty of form, or by any exterior grace; there is youth, but there is little loveliness—nor is its absence felt.

"The curtain," says Walpole, "was now drawn aside, and his genius stood displayed in its full lustre. From time to time he continued to give these works, which should be immortal if the nature of his work will allow it. Even the receipts for his subscriptions had wit in them. Many of his plates he engraved himself, and often expunged faces etched by his assistants when they had not done justice to his ideas."

The fame of Hogarth was now so well established that

the daily and weekly collectors of news began to find it worth while to describe what works he was engaged in, and the characters which were satirised in his compositions. To the industry of those persons we are indebted for various curious particulars concerning the chief persons in the "Harlot's Progress" and "Rake's Progress." Mary Moffat and Kate Hackabout divide between them the fame of the frail heroine. The latter, a personage familiar to the sitting magistrates of the day, supplied the name; and the former, a free dame who lived in some state, suggested the circumstance of beating hemp in the House of Correction in a gown richly laced with silver. The patched and sanctified-looking procuress was a certain Mother Needham, of whose history the catastrophe may be sufficient. She incurred in her vocation sentence to be pilloried in Park Lane, and was so roughly handled by the populace that she survived but a few days.

The infamous life of Colonel Charteris was notorious, and our artist has not spared him. After the verse of Pope and the pencil of Hogarth, but one thing more co uldbe wanted, and the profligate obtained that also—to wit, an epitaph by Dr. Arbuthnot: "Here continueth to rot the body of Francis Charteris, who, with an inflexible constancy, and inimitable uniformity of life, persisted, in spite of age and infirmities, in the practice of every human vice, excepting prodigality and hypocrisy; his insatiable avarice exempted him from the first—his matchless impudence from the second."

Of Justice Gonson, who was indefatigable in rummaging out ladies of loose reputation, and fortunate in the detection of thieves and robbers, it is needless to speak, since his looks have had the sanction of the lords of the treasury, and his voice the satiric commendation of Pope—

> "Talkers I've learn'd to bear; Motteux I knew;
> Henley himself I've heard, and Budgell too.
> The doctors' wormwood style, the hash of tongues
> A pedant makes, the storm of Gonson's lungs."

The justice wears the look of one in authority, and enters the house of Hogarth's heroine with slow and cautious steps. The portrait of Dr. Sacheverel, the pistols of the highwayman, her "true love," the print of the Virgin Mary, the stolen watches and jewels—these things are so many glimpses into the private life and conversation of the unfortunate.

The fat and lean physicians, who disturb the expiring sinner with their disputes, were well-known characters, who poisoned and slew in their day with more success than attends the most practised quacks of the present generation. The meagre son of Æsculapius was Dr. Misaubin, a foreigner; his corpulent adversary was home-born, and only differed with his brother about the means of conducting their patient to repose and death. They were men well qualified to fulfil the parting words of a witty northern baronet to his son, who was about to proceed into England to practise as a physician. "Go, my son, into the land of the Southron; they will find in thee the avenger of the battle of Pinkie."

The persons who crowd the eight busy scenes of the "Rake's Progress" are not so well known; many are believed to be portraits. The hero himself is probably only the personation of the vices which the painter proposed to satirise; through which the treasures amassed by sordid meanness were to be as ignobly squandered. In the halo round the head of the antiquated beldam, whom he marries to support his extravagance, we see a satiric touch at that spiritual school of painting to which Hogarth never bore any love. The two sedate personages in the scene of the gaming-table are one Manners (of the family of Rutland), to whom the Duke of Devonshire lost the great estate of Leicester Abbey, and a highwayman, who sits warming his feet at the fire, waiting quietly till the winner departs, that he may, with a craped face and a cocked pistol, follow and seize the whole. "Old Manners," says Ireland, "was the only person of his time who amassed a considerable fortune by the profession of a gamester." Hogarth has shown him

exercising his twofold avocation of miser and gamester, discounting a note-of-hand to a nobleman with a greedy hand and a rapacious eye.

In another scene the actors in the drama of prodigality are numerous and well chosen. The rake, holding his morning levée, appears stiff and ungraceful in his rich dress and newly-acquired importance, and is surrounded by visitors well qualified to reduce him from affluence to poverty. Paris sends a tailor, a dancing-master, a milliner, a master of fencing, and a blower of the French horn; we have besides an English prize-fighter, a teacher of Italian music, a garden architect, a bravo, a jockey, and a poet. One of those worthies—Dubois, a Frenchman—was memorable for his enthusiasm in the science of defence, and for having died in a quarrel with an Irishman of his own name and profession, as fiery and skilful as himself. Another was Figg, the prize-fighter, noted in the days of Hogarth for beating half-a-dozen intractable Hibernians, which accounts for the words on the label—"A Figg for the Irish." The teacher of music resembles Handel, and the embellisher of gardens has the look of Bridgman—a person who modestly boasted that his works "created landscape, realised painting, and improved nature." If the subjects which painting embodies could be as clearly described by the pen, there would be less use for the pencil; nothing short of the examination of these varied productions can properly satisfy curiosity. "The 'Rake's Levée Room,'" says Walpole, "the 'Nobleman's Dining-Room,' the 'Apartments of the Husband and Wife' in 'Marriage à-la-Mode,' the 'Alderman's Parlour,' the 'Bed-Chamber,' and many others, are the history of the manners of the age."

The fame of Hogarth and the profit arising from his pieces excited needy artists and unprincipled printsellers to engrave some of the most popular of his works and dispose of them for their own advantage. The eight prints of the "Rake's Progress" were pirated by Boitard, published on one large sheet a fortnight before the originals appeared, and called "The Progress of the Rake, exemplified in the

Life of Ramble Gripe, Esq., Son and Heir of Sir Positive Gripe." They were executed, too, with a skill which threatened to impair his income. Hogarth complained with much bitterness of this audacious proceeding; and, to put a stop to such depredations, and secure to painters generally a fair profit in their own compositions, he applied to Parliament, and obtained an Act in 1735 for recognising a legal copyright in designs and engravings, and restraining copies of such works from being made without consent of the owners.

A few very plain words, one would have thought, might have expressed this very plain meaning; but in Acts of Parliament the meaning is apt to be lost amidst the multitude of phrases, as a figure is sometimes obscured in the abundance of its drapery. One Huggins, the friend of Hogarth, drew the Act, and worded it so loosely and vaguely, that when resorted to as a remedy in the case of Jeffreys the printseller, it was the opinion of Lord Hardwicke, before whom the trial came on, that no peason claiming under an assignment from the original inventor of the paintings or designs copied could receive any benefit from it. "Hogarth," says Sir John Hawkins, "attended the hearing of the cause, and lamented to me that he han employed Huggins to draw the Act, adding that, when he first projected it, he hoped it would be such an encouragement to art, that engravers would multiply, and the shops of printsellers become as numerous as those of bakers:—a hope (adds Hawkins) which seems pretty nearly gratified."

From his pencil and his graver Hogarth obtained a twofold fame, and a right to a twofold profit—of which he naturally desired to secure the advantages to himself. His paintings, notwithstanding his general reputation, continued, however, low-priced; they were considered more as the corrupted offspring of a random inspiration than as the legitimate productions of study and art. His graver was to him as a second right-hand; he thus multiplied his works by the hundred and by the thousand, increased his

income, and established his fame everywhere. Hogarth stood alone here; by holding the graver with his own hand, he communicated to the prints an autograph importance which materially increased their value. Few painters of eminence have engraved their own pictures. Hogarth and Martin—the latter as eminent for splendid imagination in historical landscape as the former for his human nature—have secured to themselves the value of their works, and gratified purchasers with the certainty of possessing prints which have the merit of being originals rather than copies.

The attention which the Legislature paid to the artist's wishes, in passing his Bill for the encouragement of the arts of designing and engraving, was so much to his satisfaction, that he engraved a small print, with emblematic devices, to commemorate the event. What symbols failed in expressing, he supplied by means of words—and the symbols and the words were both very laudatory. On the top of the plate Hogarth etched a royal crown, shedding rays on mitres and coronets, on the Great Seal, on the Speaker's hat, and other symbols, indicating the united wisdom of king, lords, and commons. Underneath was written, "In humble and grateful acknowledgment of the grace and goodness of the legislature, manifested in the act of parliament for the encouraging of the arts of designing, engraving, etc., obtained by the endeavours, and almost at the sole expense, of the designer of this print, in 1735; by which, not only the professors of those arts were rescued from the tyranny, frauds, and piracies of monopolising dealers, and legally entitled to the fruits of their own labours; but genius and industry were also prompted by the most noble and generous inducements to exert themselves; emulation was excited, ornamental compositions were better understood, and every manufacture, where fancy has any concern, was gradually raised to a pitch of perfection before unknown: insomuch that those of Great Britain are at present the most elegant and the most in esteem in Europe."

Such is the account which Hogarth considerately gave of the works which this Act was framed to protect and encourage. There is something too much of the manufacturer in it, and more than is modest of the personal importance of the artist. Nor has he properly described the works intended to be protected. His own productions are of another order than the "ornamental," and no one but himself has yet ventured to call them elegant. His satiric compositions, like the verses of his uncle, "had more effect on the manners of the people than the sermons of the parish parson"—they were useful, but not ornamental. He calls himself, however, only a designer and engraver—letting the name of painter lie till he should lift it like a banner, and display it on a new field of glory.

In 1736 Hogarth dropped one or two more of his burning satires on the reigning follies of London. "The Sleeping Congregation," in which a heavy parson is promoting, with all the alacrity of dulness, the slumber of a respectable, but singular auditory, is very clever. Similar scenes must arise on the fancy of all who look on this work. Sleep seems to have come over the whole like a cloud. The last who yields is the clerk, a portly man, with a shining face. One of his eyes is closed, and the other is only kept open by a very fine young woman, who is sleeping very earnestly at his left hand. He is conscious of the temptation; his efforts to keep awake are very ludicrous—but it is easy to see that sleep is to be the conqueror. The second design was that of the "Distrest Poet"—a subject half-serious, half-comic. The bard himself is evidently one of those who

> "Strain from hard-bound brains eight lines a year;"

and, though the subject in hand is a gold mine, inspiration descends slowly. He is as busy with one hand as if the muse could be won by scratching, and holds the pen in the other wet with ink, to note down the tardy and reluctant words. His wife, a sweet-looking, thrifty body, as a poet's spouse requires to be, applies her hands to a certain kind

of work which will not disturb with its noise the painful reverie of her husband; she is seeking at the same time to soothe, by mild looks and well-chosen words, the clamour of a milkwoman, who exhibits an unliquidated tally.

In the same year he published two prints, the titles of which I forbear to transcribe, from pictures painted at the request of some vulgar or vicious nobleman. "He repented," says Steevens, "of having engraved them; and almost every possessor of his works will wish they had been withheld from the public."

"Southwark Fair"—another early work, but for which there is no certain date,*—is one of his most elaborate performances. It is, however, too crowded, too busy, and too extensive, and wants, what all his other works have, that central point of attraction round which all lesser and subordinate things should revolve. It exhibits a lively image of the noisy hurly-burly scenes in which our ancestors loved to indulge, and in which the gentry and nobles mingled without fear or alarm. Some sixty years ago the fields around a village fair were filled with the carriages of people of rank and condition, and noblemen, with their wives and daughters, mixed in the crowd, and kept, by their presence, the rustic part of the visitors in subordination. With this less graphic portion of the show Hogarth has not meddled. Strolling players, fire-eaters, jugglers—

> ". . . Katterfelto, with his hair on end,
> At his own wonders wondering for his bread"—

simple-faced countrymen, nimble pickpockets, and ladies with roguish eyes, are the actors who fill his stage. One of the most successful characters is that of the strutting Amazon in a hat and feather, the sole heroine in a gang of hedge comedians beating up for an audience. On this patched, painted, and buskined beauty, two clowns are staring their senses away in gaping ecstasy of enjoyment.

Of "Modern Midnight Conversation," which famous

* An advertisement which appeared in the "Craftsman" fixes the date of "Southwark Fair" as 1733.

piece we now come to, it is said by Ireland that most of the figures were portraits. This is likely; but nothing can exceed the drunken joyousness of this assembly. Around a table some dozen persons are, or have been, seated, and upon them strong wine and brandy punch have done their good offices. They are talking, swearing, singing, falling, sleeping, smoking, swilling, and huzzaing with a spirit which life alone can rival. A parson, the high priest of these festivities, personifies the satire of Thomson, and sits "a black abyss of drink." His intellects and power of swallow survive amidst the general wreck of his companions: with a pipe in one hand and a corkscrew in the other, which he uses as a tobacco-stopper, he still presides with suitable gravity,

"And to mere mortals seems a priest in drink."

Sir John Hawkins says this divine is Henley the orator, the victim of Pope; but, according to Mrs. Piozzi, he is no other than Parson Ford,* a near relative of Dr. Johnson, and famous in his day for profligacy.

* *Parson Ford.* Hereby hangs a tale—and on this subject we have obtained, through the intrepidity of Boswell, Johnson's own opinion; it is very curious. "Parson Ford, sir, was my acquaintance and relation, my mother's nephew. He had purchased a living in the country, but not simoniacally. I never saw him but in the country. I have been told he was a man of great parts: very profligate; but I never heard he was impious." Boswell—"Was there not a story of his ghost having appeared?" Johnson—"Sir, it was believed. A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again he met him a second time. When he came up, he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him that Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time. When he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some woman from Ford; but he was not to tell what or to whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back and said he had delivered the message, and the woman exclaimed that we are all undone. Dr. Pellett, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of this story, and he said the evidence was irresistible."

Of Henley the orator, who shares with Ford the reputation of

The merry group, among whom the reverend gentleman is seated, have emptied twenty-three flasks, and the twenty-fourth is decanting. Even the timepiece seems infected with the fume of the liquor, for the hour and minute-hands do not agree. In justification of the propriety of giving the priest a corkscrew, the following anecdote was related by Lord Sandwich :—"I was in a company where there were ten parsons, and I made a wager privately—and won it—that among them there was not one prayer-book. I then offered to lay another wager, that among the ten parsons there were half a score of corkscrews—it was accepted ; the butler received his instructions, pretended to break his corkscrew, and requested any gentleman to lend him one, when each priest pulled a corkscrew from his pocket." This print has carried the name of Hogarth into the remotest lands. It is considered in France and Germany the best of all his single works.

The next work of Hogarth was "The Enraged Musician." This sensitive mortal, by the frogs on his coat, appears to be a Frenchman ; and by the splendour of his dress, and grandeur of his house, we at once see that he is one of those successful performers who, with better fortune than Glasgerion, who harped fish out of the water, succeed in fiddling the gold out of misers' pockets. To perplex and distress the refined ear of this delicate Monsieur, the artist has assailed him with such a mixture and uproar of

supplying the tippling parson to Hogarth's design, the following characteristic story is related :—Henley was drinking in the Grecian Coffee-house, in company of a friend, when he was heard to say, "Pray, what is become of our old acquaintance, Dick Smith ? I have not seen him for years." Friend—"I really don't know : the last time I heard of him he was at Ceylon, or some other of our West India settlements." Henley—"Ceylon, sir ? you have made two mistakes ; Ceylon is not one of our settlements, and is in the East Indies, not the West." Friend—"That I deny." Henley—"The more shame for you ; every boy eight years old knows the truth of what I say." Friend—"Well, well, be it as you will. Thank God, I know very little about these sort of things." Henley—"What ! you thank God for your ignorance, do you ?" Friend—"I do, sir ; what then ?" Henley—"You have much to be thankful for."

vexatious sounds as defies one to contemplate. It seems impossible to increase his annoyance by the addition of any other din, save the braying of an ass, which Cowper says is the only unmusical sound in *nature*. "This strange scene," said a wit of the day, "deafens one to look at."

"This design," says Ireland, "originated in a story which was told to Hogarth by Mr. John Festin, who is the hero of the print. He was eminent for his skill in playing upon the hautboy and German flute, and much employed as a teacher of music. To each of his scholars he dedicated one hour each day." "At nine o'clock one morning," said he, "I waited upon my Lord Spencer, but his lordship being out of town, from him I went to Mr. V——n, now Lord V——n; it was so early that he was not arisen. I went into his chamber, and opening a window sat down on the window seat. Before the rails was a fellow playing upon the hautboy. A man with a barrow full of onions offered the piper an onion if he would play him a tune; that ended, he offered a second for a second tune; the same for a third, and was going on; but this was too much—I could not bear it—it angered my very soul. Zounds, said I, stop here! This fellow is ridiculing my profession—he is playing on the hautboy for onions!"

In the spirit of this story the artist has gone to work. Of vocal performers there is the dustman, shouting "Dust, ho! dust, ho!" the wandering fishmonger, calling, "Flounders!" a milkmaid crying, "Milk above! milk below!" a female ballad-singer, chanting the doleful story of the "Lady's Fall"—her child and a neighbouring parrot screaming the chorus; a little French drummer beats "rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub," without remorse, singing all the time; two cats squall and puff in the gutter tiles; a dog is howling in dismay; while, like a young demon, overlooking and inspiring all, a sweep-boy, with nothing un-black about him save his teeth and the whites of his eyes, proclaims that his work is done—from the top of a chimney-pot. Of instrumental accompaniments there is good store. A postman with his horn, a stroller

with his hautboy, a dustman with his bell, a paviour with his rammer, a cutler grinding a butcher's cleaver; and "John Long, Pewterer," over a door, adds the clink of twenty hammers striking on metal to the medley of out-of-door sounds.

The following advertisement in the *Daily London Post* for November 1740 fixes the date of this amusing production. "Shortly will be published a New Print, called the 'Provoked Musician,' designed and engraved by William Hogarth; being the companion to a print representing a 'Distrest Poet,' published some time since. To which will be added a third, on Painting, which will complete the set; but as this subject may turn upon an affair depending between the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor and the author, it may be retarded for some time." What the affair pending between Hogarth and the city was, no one has informed us. Parsons was at that time Lord Mayor.

The "Four Times of the Day," in four prints, were the next works which appeared. "In the 'Progress of the Harlot' and the 'Adventures of the Rake,' Hogarth displayed," says Ireland, "his powers as a painter of moral history; in the 'Four Times of the Day' he treads poetic ground."

He treads London streets, and finds his materials in its follies. The first scene is called "Morning." The sun is newly risen, and there is snow on the housetops. An old maiden lady, prim, withered, miserly, and morose, is walking to church, with a starved and shivering footboy bearing her prayer-book. A more than common sourness is in her look; for she sees, as if she saw them not, two fuddled beaux from Tom King's Coffee-house earnestly caressing two of the daughters of folly. The remains of a night-fire glimmer on the pavement; a young girl with a fruit-basket is warming her hands, while a beggar-woman, her companion, is soliciting charity in vain from the lady who is on her way to church. The door of Tom King's Coffee-house is filled with a crowd of drunken and riotous

companions. Swords, cudgels, and all such missiles as hasty anger picks up, are employed—and the strife grows fast and furious. Snow on the ground and icicles at the eaves are a chilling prospect; but to suit the season and the scene there is an open shop where liquor is sold; and to meet disease there is the flying physician, Doctor Rock, expatiating to a motley and marvelling audience on the miracles wrought by his medicine, which he dispenses, as his sign-post shows, by letters patent. It is said that the old maiden in this print was the portrait of a lady, who was so incensed at the satire that she struck Hogarth out of her will; she was pleased at first, for the resemblance was strong, till some good-natured friend explained it in a way injurious to the fortune of the artist. Churchill, the poet, deprived himself of a legacy in a similar way, by singing of

> "Famed Vine Street,
> Where heaven, the kindest wish of man to grant,
> Gave me an old house and an older aunt."

Tom King's Coffee-house was famed for riots and dissipation. The proprietor, Mrs. Moll King, the relict of Thomas, was well acquainted with the magistrates, and suffered in purse, and also in her person, for keeping a disorderly house. Retiring from business, and that bad eminence the pillory, to the hill of Hampstead, she lived on her early gains, paid for a pew in church, was charitable at appointed seasons, and died in peace in 1747.

The second scene is "Noon." A crowd of people are coming from church—an affected Frenchwoman, with a fop of a husband and an indulged child, are foremost. A servant girl, returning with a pie from the baker's, is stopped by a blackamoor, and from the alacrity with which her cheek and his lips come together, they may be considered as old acquaintances: both victuals and virtue, however, seem in some danger. The most natural portion of the picture is where the poor boy, in placing hastily a baked pudding on the head of a post to rest himself, has broken the dish and scattered the contents. His mouth is gaping

in misery, his eyes are shut, yet running over with tears, and he is scratching his head in a ludicrous agony which surpasses description. A poor, half-famished child is devouring some of the smoking fragments. "The scene is laid," says Ireland, "at the door of a French Chapel in Hog Lane, a part of the town at that time almost wholly peopled by French refugees or their descendants. The congregation is exclusively French, and the ludicrous saluting of the two withered beldams is national. By the dial of St. Giles's Church we see that it is only half-past eleven. At this early hour, in those good times, there was as much good eating as there is now at six o'clock in the evening. From twenty pewter measures hanging on the wall, it would seem that good drinking too was considered worthy of attention."

The third is "Afternoon," and the hour five o'clock. The foreground is occupied by a husband and wife walking out to enjoy the air. What the painter intended the former should be taken for may be guessed by the relative position in which his head and the horns of a neighbouring cow are placed: as for his partner, she is so portly, so proud, so swollen with spite, and saturated with venom, that Hogarth has evidently collected into her looks the malice and the poison of a whole district of false and domineering wives. She is fatigued, too, with the walk, angry with she knows not what, and obviously looking out for a victim worthy of her wrath. The scene is laid on the bank of the New River, near Sadler's Wells, and includes a public-house, with the head of Sir Hugh Middleton on its sign-post—the only memorial, by the way, which London ever raised of that spirited person. He was an opulent goldsmith, and beggared himself by an undertaking which gave pure water to the city and wealth to many of those who took up his speculation after him.

The fourth scene is "Night." It was the practice at that time to kindle fires openly in the public streets on occasions of rejoicing; and, as this was the twenty-ninth of May, boughs of oak were stuck over signs, and wreathed in the

hats of the merry spirits of the hour. London seems to be reeling with intoxication. In the Freemason, staggering home from the tavern assisted by a waiter, Hogarth is supposed to have satirised Sir Thomas de Veel; Sir John Hawkins, indeed, says that he could discover no such resemblance—but the resemblance probably lay less in the person than in the practice of Sir John's brother-justice. Magistrate or not, a city Xantippe is showering a midnight favour upon him from a window. "The Salisbury Flying Coach, oversetting and broken by passing through the bonfire, is said," observes Ireland, "to be an intended burlesque upon a right honourable peer, who was accustomed to drive his own carriage over hedges and rivers, and has been sometimes known to drive three or four of his maid-servants into a deep water, and there leave them in the coach to shift for themselves." The practical fun of this facetious peer has been imitated in more modern times. On the whole, "Night" scarcely satisfies expectation—indeed, it falls considerably below the excellence of its companions; grouping more varied, and a scene richer in satiric touches, were expected from the hand of one whose fault lay not in the scantiness but in the excess of materials. The Duke of Ancaster purchased the first two of these pictures for seventy-five guineas; and the remaining pair were sold to Sir William Heathcote for forty-six.*

The next production was the "Strolling Actresses," one of the most imaginative and amusing of all the works of Hogarth. In a huge barn, fitted up like a theatre, the invention of the artist has assembled such a company of

* Concerning the prints of these pictures George Faulkner thus writes from Dublin: "Mr. Delany tells me that you are going to publish more prints. Your reputation is sufficiently known to recommend any thing of yours, and I shall be glad to serve you. You may send me fifty sets, providing you take back what I cannot sell. I have often the pleasure of drinking your health with Dr. Swift, who is a great admirer of yours, and hath made mention of you in his poems with great honour, and desired me to thank you for your kind present, and to accept of his service."

performers as never before or since met to dress, rehearse, and prepare themselves for the amusement of mankind. The "Devil to Pay in Heaven" is the play they are preparing to exhibit—a rustic drama, invented to ridicule those Religious Mysteries which so long kept possession of the stage, and which, in the times of the Romish Church, were under the direction of the clergy. Such is the common account; and such might have been the aim of the satirist—but the scene seems better calculated to ridicule the ornamental painters of those days, who filled parlours and halls with mobs of the heathen divinities.

The dramatis personæ are principally ancient deities, and these of the first order. The names of Jupiter, Juno, Diana, Apollo, Flora, Night, Syren, Aurora, and Cupid figure on the playbill; and these personages are accompanied by a ghost, two eagles, two dragons, two kittens, and an aged monkey. Juno is sitting on an old wheelbarrow, which serves occasionally for a triumphal car; she stretches out one leg, raises her right hand, and rehearses her part; while Night, dressed in a starry robe, is mending her stocking. The Star of Evening, which rises over the head of Night, is a scoured tin-mould used in making tarts. A veteran damsel with one eye, and a dagger fixed in her mantle by way of skewer, represents the Tragic Muse; she is cutting a cat's tail to obtain blood for some solemn purpose, and grins well pleased as it drops into the broken dish. Two little devils, with horns just budded, are contesting the right to a pot of ale, out of which one of them is drinking lustily; the pot had occupied a Grecian altar, on which lies a loaf of bread—beside a tobacco-pipe, about whose orifice a slight smoke still lingers.

The centre of the design is occupied by Diana, stripped to her chemise. The inspiration of her part had come upon her as she prepared to dress; one foot rests on her unappropriated hoop, her head is stuck full of flowers and feathers, and she rehearses her speech with more enthusiasm of look than modesty of manner. She is unlike her

companions—she is young, blooming, and beautiful. Flora is seated at her toilet, and it would wrong her looks to say that she had no need of it. Her toilet is a wicker basket, which contains the regalia of the company; she smooths her hair with a piece of candle, holds the dredger ready, and casts her eye on a broken looking-glass, apparently with some satisfaction. Apollo and Cupid are endeavouring to bring down a pair of stockings, hung out to dry on a cloud; but the wings of the God of Love are unable to raise him, and he has recourse to a ladder. Aurora sits on the ground, with the Morning Star among her hair; she is in the service of the Syren, who offers to Ganymede a glass of gin, which he gladly accepts in the hope of curing an aching tooth. The She, who personates the Bird of Jove, is feeding her child; a regal crown holds the saucepan stuffed with pap; the child, frightened by the enormous beak of the eagle, is crying lustily. In a corner a monkey in a long cloak, a bag wig, and solitaire, is moistening the plumed helmet of Alexander the Great.

There is no limit to the drollery. One kitten touches an old lyre with apparent skill—another rolls an imperial orb; cups and balls are there, to intimate the sleight-of-hand pursuits of the company; and, as a moral remonstrance, two judges' wigs and an empty noose are near. A mitre, filled with tragedies and farces, and a dark lantern, are placed on a pulpit cushion.

The wit, the humour, and amusing absurdities of this performance are without end. Into the darkest nook the artist has put meaning, and there is instruction or sarcasm in all that he has introduced. There is such a display of the tinsel wealth and the symbols of vulgar enjoyment of the strolling community—such a ludicrous intermixture of heaven with things of the earth earthy, and such a contrast of situations and characters, that the eye is never wearied, for the mind is ever employed. It would be unfair not to note that a hen has found a roost for her chickens and herself on a set of unemployed waves, which are manufactured to perform the part of a storm at sea;

and that materials are collected for fabricating that identical kind of dramatic thunder of which John Dennis was the inventor and maker. The bill assures us that this is positively the *last performance* of the diabolical drama *in this place:* the barn, therefore, instead of ringing with comic mirth or with tragic distress, is destined in future to re-echo only the sound of the flail and fanners. This wondrous picture was sold to Francis Beckford, Esq., for £27, 6s.: he thought the price too much, and returned it to the painter, who afterwards disposed of it to Mr. Wood, of Littleton, for the same price. The genius of Hogarth was frequently obliged to bow to the parsimony of the rich and the presumption of the ignorant.

Hogarth was now in his forty-eighth year: his fame was established; he was rich enough to maintain a carriage; and though his brother artists conceded to him the name of painter with whimsical reluctance, he was everywhere received with the respect and honour due to a man of high talents and uncommon attainments. Success seldom teaches humility: it wrought no material change in Hogarth. When a poor student he displayed the same firmness of purpose in his pursuits, and defended his adherence to the dramatic species of painting (which he invented) with the same warmth, decision, and enthusiasm which characterised him now. Throughout his life his pursuits and his opinions were the same. He imagined a new national style of composition, and to this he adhered from youth to age; for the short periods devoted to portrait-painting cannot be considered as any abandonment of his original purpose—but only as sacrifices to necessity.

Hogarth supported himself by the sale of his prints: the prices of his paintings kept pace neither with his fame nor with his expectations. He knew, however, the passion of his countrymen for novelty—how they love to encourage whatever is strange and mysterious; and hoping to profit by these feelings, the artist determined to sell his principal paintings by an auction of a very singular nature.

On the 25th of January 1745 he offered for sale the six

paintings of the "Harlot's Progress," the eight paintings of the "Rake's Progress," the "Four Times of the Day," and the "Strolling Actresses," on the following conditions :—

1. Every bidder shall have an entire leaf numbered in the book of sale, on the top of which will be entered his name and place of abode, the sum paid by him, the time when, and for which picture.

2. That on the day of sale, a clock striking every five minutes shall be placed in the room ; and when it hath struck five minutes after twelve, the first picture mentioned in the sale-book shall be deemed as sold ; the second picture, when the clock hath struck the next five minutes after twelve, and so on in succession till the whole nineteen pictures are sold.

3. That none advance less than gold at each bidding.

4. No person to bid on the last day, except those whose names were before entered in the book. As Mr. Hogarth's room is but small, he begs the favour that no persons, except those whose names are entered in the book, will come to view his paintings on the last day of sale.

This plan was new, startling—and unproductive. It was probably planned to prevent biddings by proxy, and to secure to the artist the price which men of wealth and rank might be induced to offer publicly for works of genius. "A method so novel," observes Ireland, "probably disgusted the town ; they might not exactly understand this tedious formula of entering their names and places of abode in a book open to indiscriminate inspection ; they might wish to humble an artist who, by his proposals, seemed to consider that he did the world a favour in suffering them to bid for his works ; or the rage for paintings might be confined to the admirers of the old masters ; be that as it may, he received only four hundred and twenty-seven pounds, seven shillings for his nineteen pictures—a price by no means equal to their merit. The prints of the 'Harlot's Progress' had sold much better than those of the Rake's, yet the paintings of the former produced only fourteen guineas each, while those of the latter were sold

for twenty-two. That admirable picture, 'Morning,' brought twenty guineas, and 'Night,' in every respect inferior to almost any of his works, six-and-twenty." Such was the reward, then, to which the patrons of genius thought these works entitled. More has been since given, over and over again, for a single painting, than Hogarth obtained for all his paintings put together.

The coldness of the town and the reserve of wealthy purchasers, however, may have arisen, in part at least, from another cause than the singularity of the mode of sale. The wit and humour of Hogarth were ever ready to flow out; and here, unfortunately for his profit, he sent forth his satire in the shape of a card of admission to his sale. This production—which, among the lovers of art, has obtained the name of the "Battle of the Pictures"—is still more singular than his plan of auction; he seemed resolved never to do an ordinary thing in a common way. As he had not spared his speech in ridicule of those who thought all beauty and excellence were contained in the old religious paintings, so neither did he feel disposed to spare them when the subject came fairly before his pencil.

It is no easy matter to describe with accuracy this curious card. On the ground are placed three rows of paintings from the foreign school—one row of the "Bull and Europa"—another of "Apollo flaying Marsyas"—and a third of "St. Andrew on the Cross." There are hundreds of each, to denote the system of copyism and imposture which had filled the country with imitations and caricatures. Above them is an unfurled flag, emblazoned with an auctioneer's hammer; while a cock, on the summit of the sale-room, with the motto "p-u-f-s," represents Cocks, the auctioneer, and the mode by which he disposed of those simulated productions. On the right hand, in the open air, are exposed to sale the principal pictures of Hogarth, and against them, as if moved by some miraculous wind, the pictures of the old school are driven into direct collision. The foreign works seem the aggressors—

the havoc is mutual and equal. A "Saint Francis" has penetrated, in a very ludicrous way, into Hogarth's "Morning"—a "Mary Magdalen" has successfully intruded herself into the third scene of the "Harlot's Progress," and the splendid saloon scene in "Marriage-à-la-Mode" suffers severely by the "Aldobrandini Marriage." "Thus far," as Ireland observes, "the battle is in favour of the ancients; but the aërial combat has a different termination;—for by the riotous scene in the 'Rake's Progress' a hole is made in Titian's 'Feast of Olympus,' and a 'Bacchanalian,' by Rubens, shares the same fate from 'Modern Midnight Conversation.'"

Having sold his nineteen favourite pictures at a price which must have stung his proud spirit, he imagined and executed a new series of moral, instructive, and satiric paintings. These are the six scenes of "Marriage-à-la-Mode." That he thought very well of this new series is countenanced by the circumstance of his making the saloon scene one of the combatants in the "Battle of the Pictures," though it had not been exposed to sale at the time, nor even engraved. They show the same command of character, the same knowledge of human life, the same skill in grouping, the same art of uniting many different parts into one clear consistent story, the same satiric force and dramatic detail, which characterise his best productions. They also show the same undaunted spirit in grappling with human depravity. The victim is higher—the sacrificing weapon is the same.

Of this work Dr. Shebbeare formed a novel, called the "Marriage Act," and the author of the "Clandestine Marriage" found the story of his drama in its scenes. Our artist gave the following intimation of its appearance in the *London Daily Post* of April 7th, 1743:—"Mr. Hogarth intends to publish by subscription six plates, from copper-plates engraved by the best masters in Paris, after his own paintings—the heads, for the better preservation of the characters and expressions, to be done by the author—representing a variety of modern occurrences in high life,

and called 'Marriage-à-la-Mode.' Particular care is taken that the whole shall not be liable to any exception on account of *indecency or inelegancy;* and that none of the characters represented shall be personal." Hogarth seldom sought to conceal either his pleasure or his vexation—his feelings flowed into his advertisements as well as into his conversation. He alludes to the charges which his enemies were ever ready to bring against him, of grossness and personality; and it is evident that he cares very little for their censures.

The first scene of this series represents the preparations for marriage between the daughter of a rich citizen and the son and heir of a proud old peer. The bride's father, a prudent, sordid man, cares little for the bridegroom's ancient pedigree, which is satirically exhibited as issuing out of the mailed lions of the Bastard of Normandy; but he respects the ample securities which the aged nobleman lays before him. The young lord, a fop in his dress and something of a fool in his looks, gazes at his person in the glass, and practises with his snuff-box infinitely more to his own satisfaction than to that of his *intended*—who turns half from him in scorn, plays with her wedding-ring, and listens, as much as offended pride will allow, to the words of Mr. Silvertongue, a smooth and insinuating lawyer. Beside them there are two spaniels, coupled contrary to their inclinations, and pulling different ways—symbolical of the happiness to be expected from the approaching union.

Of the other five pictures of the series, a less particular description may serve; their story of domestic misery is neither involved nor mysterious. The peer sought wealth for his son, the citizen rank for his daughter—and so two vain, giddy, and extravagant young persons are united. Dissensions forthwith ensue. My lord runs a career of extravagance and dissipation, neglects his wife, and associates with gamblers, spendthrifts, and courtesans. My lady resents the coldness and neglect of her husband, listens too much to the eloquence of the lawyer, frequents the gaming-tables of people of rank, and impairs by degrees

her fortune and her reputation. At length, in the midst of a heartless scene, where outlandish fiddlers and singers, and other expensive consumers of time, are assembled—where my Lord some-one listens to their music in joy, and my Lady—I have forgotten her name—faints with ecstasy—the heroine of "Marriage-à-la-Mode" consents to a meeting at a masquerade; and we see her no more till she appears kneeling in her night-dress, in a bagnio, before her injured husband, who has just received a mortal thrust from the sword of her seducer. The change is indeed sudden; but from splendour to misery the way is often short enough, and from innocence to guilt there is but a step. The concluding scene is in the house of the lady's father:—her husband had been *murdered:* the last dying speech of her paramour lies at her feet—she ought not, nor does she seek, to live. The unfortunate empties a phial of laudanum, and expires—her only child twines its little arms round her neck, and the sordid old father carefully removes a costly ring from her finger. Such is the outline of a dramatic story which it would require a volume to describe;—so great, so various, and so lavish is its wealth of satire and pathos—with such waste of ornament, such overflowing knowledge of life, nature, and manners, has Hogarth emblazoned this domestic tragedy. The world rewarded these works with immediate approbation; many sets of the engravings were sold; and the artist announced the original paintings for sale in the public papers.

Hogarth had long waged war with tongue, with pen, and with pencil against the opulent tribe of picture-dealers, and all those who aided in the introduction of copies of foreign masters to the injury of the native school. Such unremitting hostility seems to have suited the temper, as much as it gratified the pride, of the painter; and though he sometimes experienced sharp retorts and suffered a little in the fracas, he had the supreme satisfaction of making his opponents ridiculous. In his advertisement for the sale of the "Marriage-à-la-Mode," in 1750, the following characteristic passage occurs:—"As, according to the

standard so righteously and so laudably established, by picture-dealers, picture-cleaners, picture-frame makers, and other connoisseurs, the works of a painter are to be esteemed more or less valuable as they are more or less scarce, and as the living painter is most of all affected by the inferences resulting from this, and other considerations equally candid and edifying, Mr. Hogarth, by way of precaution, not puff, begs leave to urge, that probably this will be the last sale of pictures he may ever exhibit, because of the difficulty of vending such a number at once to any tolerable advantage, and that the whole number he has already exhibited, of the historical or humorous kind, does not exceed fifty; of which the three sets called the 'Harlot's Progress,' the 'Rake's Progress,' and that now to be sold, make twenty; so that, whoever has a taste of his own to rely on, and is not too squeamish, and has courage enough to own it by daring to give them a place in a collection till Time, the supposed finisher, but real destroyer of paintings, has rendered them fit for those more sacred repositories where schools, names, heads, masters, etc., attain their last stage of preferment, may from hence be convinced that multiplicity at least of his, Mr. Hogarth's, pieces, will be no diminution of their value."

This is petulant enough, and in very indifferent taste. His strange advertisements, and still stranger plans of sale, stirred up the spirit of the town against him, and the result is thus related by Mr. Lane, who unexpectedly became the public purchaser of the "Marriage-à-la-Mode." "The sale was to take place by a kind of auction, where every bidder was to write on a ticket the price he was disposed to give, with his name subscribed to it. These papers were to be received by Mr. Hogarth for the space of one month, and the highest bidder at twelve o'clock on the last day of the month was to be the purchaser. This strange mode of proceeding probably disobliged the public, and there seemed to be at that time a combination against Hogarth, who, perhaps from the frequent and extraordinary approbation of his works, might have imbibed some degree of vanity,

which the town in general, friends and foes, seemed resolved to mortify. If this was the case, and to me it was fully apparent, they fully effected their design; for on the 6th of June 1750, which was to decide the fate of this capital work, when I arrived at the Golden Head, expecting, as was the case at the sale of the 'Harlot's Progress,' to find his study full of noble and great personages, I only found Hogarth and his friend Dr. Parsons, secretary to the Royal Society.* I had bid £110; no one arrived; and ten minutes before twelve, I told the artist I would make the pounds guineas. The clock struck, and Mr. Hogarth wished me joy of my purchase, hoping it was an agreeable one; I said perfectly so. Dr. Parsons was very much disturbed, and Hogarth very much disappointed, and truly with great reason. The former told me the painter had hurt himself by naming so early an hour for the sale, and Hogarth, who overheard him, said, in a marked tone and manner, 'Perhaps it may be so.' I concurred in the same opinion, said he was poorly rewarded for his labour, and, if he chose, he might have till three o'clock to find a better bidder. Hogarth warmly accepted the offer, and Dr. Parsons proposed to make it public. I thought this unfair, and forbade it. 'At one o'clock,' Hogarth said, 'I shall trepass no longer on your generosity; you are the proprietor, and, if you are pleased with the purchase, I am abundantly so with the purchaser.' He then desired me to promise that I would not dispose of the paintings without informing him, nor permit any person to meddle with them under pretence of cleaning them, as he always desired to do that himself."

The excellence of these six noble pictures was acknowledged by the whole nation, and they were in frames worth

* The artist, some one informed Nichols, on the morning of this mortifying day, put on his best wig, strutted away one hour, and fretted away two more, muttering as he moved up and down, "No picture-dealer shall be allowed to bid." There is little in this—it is proper for a man to dress well when he expects good company—and Hogarth had a very proper hatred for picture-dealers.

four guineas each; yet no one felt them to be worth more than ninety pounds, six shillings.

Well might the proud heart of Hogarth be stung as he closed this memorable sale. He knew how opulent the land was, and how lavish of its wealth to the impostor, the mountebank, and the cheat. On Farinelli, the Italian singer, for one night's performance in the Opera of "Artaxerxes," the nobles of England showered more riches than would have purchased all the productions which Hogarth ever painted. Gold boxes, diamond rings, diamond buckles, etc., came in such abundance, that the vain creature exclaimed, "There is but one God and one Farinelli." "The sums lavished," says Ireland, "upon exotic warblers would have paid an army; the applause bestowed upon some of them would have turned the brain of a saint. It was little short of adoration."

Hogarth projected a corresponding series of paintings under the name of the "Happy Marriage," and made some progress in the designs. He had, indeed, gone so far as to sketch out the whole six scenes in colours; and Steevens, holding the pen in Nichols's anecdotes, gives us a description of them which he obtained from a gentleman whom the painter had indulged with a hasty glance:—"The time supposed was immediately after the return of the parties from church, and the scene lay in the hall of an antiquated country mansion. On one side the new-married couple were represented sitting. Behind them was a group of their young friends, of both sexes, in the act of breaking the bride-cake over their heads. In front appeared the father of the young lady grasping a bumper, and drinking, with a seeming roar of exultation, to the future happiness of her and her husband. By his side was a table covered with refreshments. Under the screen of the hall several rustic musicians in grotesque attitudes, together with servants and tenants, were arranged. Through the arch by which the room was entered, the eye was led along the passage into the kitchen, which afforded a glimpse of sacerdotal luxury. Before the dripping-pan stood a well-fed divine

in his gown and cassock, with his watch in his hand, giving directions to a cook, dressed all in white, who was employed in basting a haunch of venison."

This work, which bore the promise of great excellence, and also of great moral value, was never finished; and why the artist discontinued his labour it is now in vain to inquire. If wedded life could not supply him, as Steevens absurdly and injuriously supposes, with six successive images of domestic happiness, he was truly an unfortunate man. That the painter's own marriage-bed was unblessed with children is true; but surely the absence of children does not imply the absence of all that is picturesque in human enjoyment. If it were so—Hogarth had many friends more fortunate in this respect than himself; and, for an imagination such as his, it could have been no hard task to endow his wedded pair with a progeny worthy of the patriarchs. Nor is wedded felicity necessarily made up of continual seriousness, grave admonitions, examples of regular conduct, and precepts of wisdom and prudence. It embraces enough of mirth, enough of folly, enough of humour, to have mingled well with the austere composure, and meek affection, and graver duties of domestic life—and to have formed a work of the picturesque kind which Steevens desired, and which Hogarth excelled in. We may seek some other cause than want of proper materials for the abandonment of this design.

A work of a less important character came across his fancy. He had been an apprentice, and witnessed the various ways in which the youth of London wasted or improved their time. He was aware of the allurements which tempt boys to idleness, and knew from experience how necessary industry is to obtain success in any pursuit of profit and honour. Under the influence of these feelings, he conceived and etched his twelve scenes of alternate "Industry and Idleness," and in 1747 gave them to the world. Their aim was better than their execution; for, from a wish to render them popular amongst those whose purses were light, and whose condition needed them most,

he made the size of his prints moderate and the price low. Hogarth thus modestly announces his object and his work —"'Industry and Idleness' exemplified in the conduct of two fellow 'prentices; where one, by taking good courses, and pursuing points for which he was apprenticed, becomes a valuable man, and an ornament to his country: the other, by giving way to idleness, naturally falls into poverty, and ends fatally, as expressed in the last print." The thrifty citizens of London welcomed these works warmly, and hung them in public and private places as guides and examples to their children and dependants. They are not equal in character to many of the works of the artist; but they are plain, natural, and impressive scenes, and fulfil the purpose of the moral painter.

Hogarth met Lord Lovat at St. Albans, on his way to the Tower and the scaffold, and painted his portrait. "I took this likeness," said the artist, "when Simon Fraser was relating on his fingers the numbers of the rebel forces—such a chieftain had so many men, etc. He received me with much cordiality—embraced me as I entered, and kissed me, though he was under the hands of a barber. The muscles of his neck appeared of unusual strength—more so than I have ever seen." When the plate was finished, a printseller, of a more liberal nature than Mr. Bowles, offered its weight in gold for it. The impressions could not be taken off so fast as they were wanted, though the rolling press wrought without intermission. It produced at the rate of about twelve pounds per day for several weeks. The brave and wily old chieftain lived like a robber and died like a Roman.

Soon after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, Hogarth went into France, to extend his sphere of observation. His journey was short, and his stay brief. He imagined himself in a land as free as England; began to sketch one of the gates of Calais; was arrested as a spy, and carried before the governor for examination. The offence which he had unwittingly committed was thought serious enough to warrant his immediate transportation to England,

and this seems to have been performed in a manner calculated to embitter his feelings. Two guards accompanied him on board, and, after having insolently twirled him round and round on the deck, told him he might proceed on his voyage without further molestation. This circumstance was not calculated to lessen that sturdy, good-humoured sort of dislike which old-fashioned English people even now entertain towards France, and of which Hogarth had his full share. He arrived at Dover deeply incensed; and as he was of a temper which resented injuries, something sarcastic and bitter was expected from his pencil.

Those persons who went with Hogarth to France, Hayman the painter and Cheere the sculptor, find an excuse for the governor of Calais in the blunt rudeness and uncivil curiosity of their companion. They were witnesses of his conduct, and of his arrest and dismissal. They related on their return that he was displeased, from the first, with the people, with the country, with the houses, and with the fare. All he looked upon was declared to be in bad taste; the houses, he said, were either gilt or befouled; he laughed when he saw a ragged boy; and, at the sight of silk stockings with holes in them, he burst out into very imprudent language. In vain his friends warned him to be more cautious in his remarks; for as Calais swarmed with Scotch and Irish, he was not to imagine that his sarcasms were concealed in his foreign language. He mocked their fears, and ridiculed his companions as the unworthy sons of a free country. This certainly was unadvised and arrogant.

Hogarth sought to avenge the affront he had received by a design called the "Roast Beef of Old England." It was recommended to national prejudice by the tempting name, but it cannot be considered as one of his happy works. The scene is laid at the Gate of Calais. A French cook appears staggering under an immense piece of roasted beef; a well-fed monk stays him to gaze on it, and seems anxious to bless and cut; and a half-starved, meagre community of

soldiers surround the reeking wonder with looks ridiculously wistful. Hogarth is seated busily sketching the scene, and the hand of a Frenchman is laid on his shoulder, denoting his arrest. There is not much venom in this; such a satire could be invented without much outlay of invention. A man is not necessarily famishing because he eats little roast beef; nor are abstemiousness and cheerfulness under privation very happy subjects of ridicule.* I have not heard that any Frenchman was hurt by this national satire. An Englishman felt it more acutely. Pine the painter sat for the portrait of the friar, and hence acquired the name of Father Pine, which he disliked so much that he requested the likeness might be altered. Of his tour in France, Hogarth, it is said, loved not to speak. He scarcely counted that man his friend who alluded to it. He, who had made so many men appear ridiculous, had no wish to seem so himself. He ventured, however, to write in his memorandum book, "The first time an Englishman goes from Dover to Calais he must be struck with the different face of things at a little distance. A farcical pomp of war, pompous parade of religion, and much bustle with very little business. To sum up all, poverty, slavery, and innate insolence, covered with an affectation of politeness, give you even here a true picture of the manners of the whole nation. The friars are dirty, sleek, and solemn; the soldiery are lean, ragged, and tawdry; and, as to the fishwomen, their faces are absolute leather."

A painting of a serious character escaped from his hand during the pressure of more engrossing engagements—the "Presentation of young Moses to the daughter of Pharaoh." It appeared in 1751. There is an air of serene and simple dignity about it, which is some relief to the scenes of boisterous humour and moral reproof of his other performances. The original was presented to the Foundling Hospital. The

* The figure of his half-starved French sentinel has since been copied at the top of our printed advertisements for recruits—a well-fed English soldier stands opposite. The appeal had probably some effect, for it has often been repeated.

receipt for the print of his work was nearly as valuable as the print itself. It is a "St. Paul before Felix," designed in the Dutch style; nothing can surpass it for broad humour. The saint stands and harangues on a three-footed stool; and such is the power of his eloquence, that the Roman more than trembles—witness the compressed nostrils of his companions;—a Jew, with flashing eyes and a ready knife, surveys his expected victim, while a little sooty devil, with a malicious eye and white teeth, saws away one of the feet from the Apostle's stool. Sir Robert Strange, in his "Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy," says, that the donations made by painters of their works to the Foundling Hospital led to the idea of those exhibitions which now prove so lucrative at Somerset House. Hogarth was the first and most extensive of all these benefactors.

The "Four Stages of Cruelty" was his next work—and I wish it never had been painted. There is indeed great skill in the grouping, and profound knowledge of character; but the whole effect is gross, brutal, and revolting. A savage boy grows into a savage man, and concludes a career of cruelty and outrage by an atrocious murder, for which he is hanged and dissected. The commencement is painful; and the conclusion can scarcely be looked upon save by men practised in surgery or the shambles.

The "March of the Guards to Finchley" is a performance of a different character; it is steeped in humour and strewn over with delightful absurdities. The approach of Prince Charles, in the fatal Forty-five, is supposed by Hogarth to summon the heroes of London to the field; and the very nature of the important contest is expressed in the central group of the composition, where a grenadier stands, a ludicrous picture of indecision, between his Catholic and Protestant doxies. The scene is laid in Tottenham Court Road. In the distance the more orderly and obedient portion of the soldiery are seen marching northward; but, if discipline conducts the front, confusion brings up the rear. A baggage-waggon moves lumbering

along in the middle of the way, with its burden of women, babies, knapsacks, and camp-kettles—and around it is poured a reeling and disorderly torrent of soldiers, inflamed or stupefied with liquor, and stunned and distracted by the clamour of wives, children, and concubines. There is such staggering and swaggering—such carousing and caressing—such neglect of all discipline, and obedience to nothing save the caprice of the moment—as probably never was witnessed; and yet all is natural, consistent, characteristic.

It was inscribed before publication to George the Second, and a print was sent to the palace for royal examination and approval. The king, himself a keen soldier, had naturally expected to see a more serious and orderly work—one more in honour of those favourite Guards who had marched so readily against the rebels. "The first question," says Ireland, "was to a nobleman in waiting—'Pray, who is this Hogarth?' 'A painter, my liege.' 'Painter—I hate painting, and poetry too! neither the one nor the other ever did any good. Does the fellow mean to laugh at my Guards?' 'The picture, an please your majesty, must undoubtedly be considered as a burlesque.' 'What, a painter burlesque a soldier!—he deserves to be picketed for his insolence. Take his trumpery out of my sight.'" Such is the story: it is easier to transcribe than to believe it literally. The painter, however, by all accounts, was mortified by the reception which his work received from his majesty. He certainly dedicated it in a pet to the King of Prussia, as an encourager of art, and received a handsome acknowledgment from Frederick.

Hogarth meant no more by this work than a piece of humorous and good-natured satire. The freedom which an Englishman enjoys allows him to laugh at the failings and the follies of high and low; the ministers of the crown, the ministers of the church, judges, courtiers, sailors, and soldiers, all are alike liable to be satirised and lampooned. No one can walk along our streets without observing, in almost every printseller's window, the most audacious

caricatures and representations of the highest as well as the humblest of the land; the toleration of such works is only a proof of the liberty of the people, and the good sense and good nature of their rulers.

When, however, Wilkes quarrelled with Hogarth, he discovered on a sudden the malice of the "March of the Guards to Finchley," and rated the artist roundly. These are the words of honest, conscientious John:—"In the year 1746, when the Guards were ordered to march to Finchley, on the most important service they could be employed in—the extinguishing a Scottish rebellion, which threatened the entire ruin of the illustrious family on the throne, and, in consequence, of our liberties—Mr. Hogarth came out with a print to make them ridiculous to their countrymen and to all Europe; or perhaps it was rather to tell the Scots, in his way, how little the Guards were to be feared, and that they might safely advance. That the ridicule might not stop here, and that it might be as offensive as possible to his own sovereign, he dedicated the print to the King of Prussia, as an encourager of the arts. Is this patriotism? In old Rome, or in any of the Grecian states, he would have been punished as a profligate citizen, totally devoid of all principle. In England he is rewarded, and made serjeant-painter to that very king's grandson."

How little all this bitterness of Wilkes was called for or deserved, a few dates will show. The battle of Culloden, which extinguished the rebellion and the hopes of the House of Stuart for ever, was fought and won in 1746—and the print of which Wilkes complains was published in 1750. What a hardened hater of his country Hogarth must have been; and what indomitable rebels those Scotchmen, who, after rotting four years on the moor of Drummossie, were ready to profit by the information of the painter, that the Guards were not to be feared, and that they had nothing to do but to advance boldly on London! There is nothing so blind as anger. The very heads of their chiefs were blackening in the sun and wind on Temple Bar three years before this horrid print made its

appearance; and Mr. Wilkes had published many numbers of his "North Briton," and eaten many a good dinner in company with Mr. Hogarth, before he discovered that treason had been committed in the "March to Finchley."

The original painting was, on the publication of the print, disposed of by a kind of lottery, established on a surer principle of remuneration than that adopted in the case of "Marriage-à-la-Mode." Seven shillings and sixpence was fixed as the price of a print; and every purchaser of a print was entitled to a chance in the lottery for the picture. Eighteen hundred and forty-three chances were subscribed for; a hundred and sixty-seven tickets, which remained, were presented to the Foundling Hospital. One of the Hospital's tickets drew the desired prize; and on the same night Hogarth delivered the painting to the governors, not a little pleased that it was to adorn a public place. The artist gained £300 by this speculation. "A lottery," he observed, "is the only way a living painter has of being paid for his time." The late Duke of Ancaster offered the Hospital £300 for the painting; it could not, of course, be accepted.

His next pictures were those of "Beer Street" and "Gin Lane"—two very clever works, which have been well described by Ireland. "In the first, we see healthy and happy beings inhaling copious draughts of a liquor which seems perfectly congenial to their mental and corporeal powers: in the second, a group of emaciated wretches, who, by swallowing liquid fire, have consumed both." Beer the artist considers as nutritive and strengthening—gin as poisonous and pernicious. Those who adhere to the former look fresh and hale, perform all the duties of manhood and the functions of their stations, and die respected and regretted; while those who tipple the latter, pollute the brain, sap the strength, and become a burden to themselves, and a disgrace to human nature. Hogarth's beer-bibbers are very joyous, pleasant personages—the lovers of gin are squalid and hideous; in the neighbourhood of the first, honest occupations abound and prosper—in the region of

the others, the only person who looks happy and thriving is a sordid pawnbroker, at whose house the wretches dispose of their rags, scarcely leaving themselves enough to conceal their shame.

The two pictures called "France" and "England," which followed these, are inspired by the same sort of feeling as the "Roast Beef," and may rank in the same class. They are intensely national, and severely ludicrous. In the former, the French are represented in active preparation for the invasion of England, and heroic fire never animated such a mob of odd mortals to keep time to fife and drum. A priest tries the edge of an axe, which, with chains and instruments of torture, accompanies the invaders; whilst a soldier spits with his sword five frogs, and roasts them over the fire of a bivouac—the sight and smell cheer his passing countrymen. A vessel lies close to the shore, planks are laid between the land and the deck, and the meagre and reluctant heroes of the Grand Monarque proceed on board. The other picture is better. The artist has assembled under the sign of the "Jolly Old Duke of Cumberland" a recruiting party, with such other liegemen of the King of England as love of merriment and love of drink might draw fortuitously together. Beef, bread, and beer have formed the ample regale; and the threatened invasion by France is now the topic of conversation. The ardour of the moment has induced a young rustic to volunteer into the line; the artful or anxious recruit augments his height by standing slily on tiptoe, and the prudent sergeant slopes his measuring rod to enable him to pass muster in inches. A facetious grenadier has drawn a large caricature of the King of France, who brandishes a long sword with one hand, and a gibbet with an empty noose in the other, and exclaims in a label, "You take a my fine ships; you be de pirate, you be de teef; me send my grand armies and hang you all." The national contempt of danger is well expressed by this group of military worthies; and, had the artist lived in later times, he would have seen the same feeling enthusiastically

manifested by the whole island, when the danger was every way more imminent, and the talent of the invader warranted the severest apprehension. The engravings from these pictures were published in 1756, and accompanied with verses by David Garrick, more illustrative of the good-will of the great actor than of his poetical genius.

Hogarth was peculiarly the painter for the people; he loved to contemplate their scenes of fun and festivity, and expose their follies. "It is worth your while to come to England," thus Sherlock wrote to a Frenchman at Paris, "were it only to see an election and a cock-match. There is a celestial spirit of anarchy and confusion in those two scenes that words cannot paint, and of which no countryman of yours can form even an idea." Hogarth performed what words could not accomplish, and in a series of prints on these popular subjects, exhibited the anarchy of an English election and the confusion of a cockpit.

Of the "Cockpit" I shall speak first, for the subject is more contracted in its nature, and less generally interesting than the other. On a platform two cocks, trimmed and armed with steel spurs, are pitted against each other, and a crowd of eager and motley sportsmen press around. No one can look on this scene of barbarity and swindling without feeling conscious that the artist took from living reality the iniquity which he drew. "The scene," says Ireland, "is probably laid at Newmarket; and in this motley group of peers, pickpockets, butchers, rat-catchers, gentlemen, and gamblers, Lord Albemarle Bertie, being the principal figure, is entitled to precedence. What rendered his lordship's passion for amusements of this description very singular, was his being totally blind. In this place he is beset by seven steady friends, five of whom offer to bet with him at the same instant on the event of the battle. One of them, a lineal descendant of Filch, taking advantage of his blindness and negligence, endeavours to convey away a bank-note, deposited in our dignified gambler's hat, to his own pocket; of this attempt his lordship is apprised by a ragged potboy and an honest butcher; but he is so much engaged in the

pronunciation of these important words, 'Done! done! done!' that he cannot attend to their hints, and it seems more than probable that the stock will be transferred, and the note negotiable in a few seconds." A French marquis looks contemptuously upon the scene, and mutters, "Sauvages! sauvages!" I know not what influence the satire of the painter had on this horrid pastime—it could not be much: those who delight in such scenes are case-hardened beyond the reach of satire.

An election of a member of parliament opens a wide field; and it cannot but be acknowledged that the painter handles his subject with all that is requisite both of knowledge and of feeling. The subject is divided into four scenes—the "Entertainment," the "Canvassing for Votes," the "Polling," and the "Chairing." The first was finished in 1755, and the last appeared in 1758. The whole were received with very general approbation. Of those varied scenes of feasting and bribery, canvassing and corruption, sober villainy and tipsy drollery, eating and drinking, fighting and fooling, it would require a volume to give a full account. In allusion to those periodical contests Voltaire remarked that the English went mad once every seven years, and these four pictures sustain to a great extent the accuracy of the sarcasm. In other works which the artist executed he gave us but a portion of society, a glimpse of public or of domestic life, a satiric exposition of some particular vice or darling folly; but in these he has shown us the majesty of the people, broad and unfettered, in the full and free exercise of constitutional functions, and the enjoyment of more than royal powers.

The first scene is laid at an inn, where the table is spread and the cellar-doors thrown open for the friends of the court candidate. This seeker of a seat in St. Stephen's was one Mr. Thomas Potter, a gentleman with an easy, unembarrassed air, and a look of courteous assurance; he is at the head of the table, and seems to have finished his dinner. A tipsy beldam is whispering in his ear; and a voter, with all the easy familiarity which the times warrant,

knocks their heads together, and shakes the ashes of his pipe among the candidate's powdered curls. At the other end of the table sits a corpulent dignitary of the borough corporation, with a forty-horse power of swallow. He has, however, gulped oysters till his breath is stopped, and a friendly barber-surgeon restores him by opening a vein. All around the table streams a full and flowing tide of electors—barbers, cobblers, and counsellors—the briber and the bribed, the rustic wit, the village politician, and the parson, with

"A voice like the sea, and a drouth like a whale,"

are mingled in wild and ludicrous disorder. Showers of stones, from the partisans of the patriotic and popular candidate, make their way through the windows; and the fierce uproar without contrasts with the drunken festivity within. The portrait of Sir John Parnell was introduced into this scene at his own request: "My face," he said, "is well known in Ireland, and will help the sale of the engraving."

The second scene, the "Canvass," is laid in the street of the borough. Bribery and corruption are busy. A freeholder is represented, standing independent and erect, between two bustling agents of the contending factions, both of whom are putting gold into his not unwilling hands. He stands, the accurate personification of that adage roughened into rhyme by the wit of the poet,

"——The value of a thing
Is just the price that it will bring."

His wishes are with the heaviest purse and the most liberal hand: and while interest advises him to take all that both will give, conscience counsels him to vote for the best paymaster. He stands, like the balance of justice, with gold in either scale; and one sees the mercury of sordid satisfaction ascending within him as guinea drops after guinea into his avaricious hands. The British Lion—a fragment of the prow of a ship—sits swallowing the Lily of France; beside

it, the buxom landlady of one of the candidate's inns is counting the gains she has made by her interest in the borough, while an able-bodied grenadier looks on, conscious that ere all be over he is like to have a share in the spoil. A crowd in the distance, inflamed by drink, inspired by the freedom of these festive times, and touched a little by personal interest, are engaged in a fierce attack on the "Crown" public-house. A rustic, whose natural stupidity seems increased by drink, is employed in sawing away the projecting beam from the wall which supports the sign, wholly unconscious that when the Crown falls he will fall also. Both candidates are busied in bribing and conciliating the male and female proprietors of the borough; and a very ancient and meritorious son of freedom, Punch, has declared himself a candidate upon the united interest of fun and frolic.

The third is the "Polling." The lame, the blind, the deaf, the maimed, the dying, and even the dead, are moving or carried onward to the hustings. The first man who tenders his vote is an old soldier, who has lost a leg and his right hand; he is opposed by a quibbling attorney, on the ground that the law requires the voter to lay his *right* hand on the sacred book and swear. The second voter is deaf, and not a little insane; but he is prompted by Dr. Shebbeare, who is roaring into his ear the name of the candidate to whom he promised his vote. This worthy person was pilloried by Mansfield for a libel on the king, and pensioned into silence by Bute. The third voter is a sick man, borne along in a blanket, with his doctor by his side. This is a satire on Dr. Barrowby, who persuaded a dying patient to accompany him in his chariot to vote for Sir George Vandeput; the man went, voted, and expired. The rear of the electors is brought up by a blind man and a cripple. The carriage of Britannia is overturning, while her coachman and footman are cheating at cards on the box. A woman admonishes them in vain, by holding up for sale a last dying speech, inscribed with a ready gibbet and an empty noose.

The fourth and concluding scene is the "Chairing of the Member," and it is one of the busiest and best of the series. This fortunate person—who was thought to look very like Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe—is seated on a chair, raised on the shoulders of four brawny constituents, and borne in triumph through the free and loyal borough of Guzzledown. Foes, however, mingle with friends, and it cannot be supposed that his triumph will be endured without opposition and strife. The fray which is to trouble him in the midst of his success is begun. A thrasher, with his flail, prostrates by a blow, meant for another, one of the living props of the chair; the member's wig rises from his head with fear; a lady swoons at the sight; a sow, with a litter of pigs, goes grunting in desperation through the thickest of the mob; while a scared goose flies over the borough, to carry to St. Stephen's an account of the insult offered to the pure and honourable House in this attack on the in dependent representative of Guzzledown. David Garrick gave the painter some two hundred pounds for those truly national productions.

Of the likenesses of living persons introduced into these designs it is scarcely necessary to speak. There are merits which are temporary and fleeting; faces are forgotten as generations pass away; and of all the millions who lived and breathed in 1756, a few names only remain on the sunny side of oblivion. All who smarted from the artist's satire are as cold and silent as himself; and by inserting in my narrative the names of Thomas Potter, Dr. Shebbeare, the Rev. Dr. Cosserat, and Sir John Parnell—nay, even of Lord Melcombe and the Duke of Newcastle—I add but little to the interest of these four pictures. The merits of original fancy, natural action, careless humour, and amusing and instructive incident, are matters of another kind; and these keep, and will keep, the works of Hogarth as fresh and interesting as they ever were. All who are acquainted with the business of the English hustings will perceive and feel the accuracy of these designs. There is always some noisy patriot of the hour to mislead and

inflame the people ; there is always some shrewd and crafty courtier to soothe and bribe his way ; and shall we ever want a swarm of sordid electors to sell their votes to the most opulent?

I have remarked elsewhere that when Hogarth painted his own portrait he etched upon the palette a winding line, with this motto, "Line of Beauty and Grace." The mystery of the winding line and these words remained unexplained till 1753, when he published the "Analysis of Beauty," a work very clearly and cleverly written, containing many original and natural notions concerning art, and composed on purpose to establish the principle, that the winding or serpentine line is the foundation of all that is fair and beautiful in the works of art, as well as the productions of nature. The examples which he cites, and the arguments which he uses, are ingenious, if not convincing. In nature the leaves which clothe the trees, and the flowers which cover the ground, with all that buds and blooms, and yields fragrance of fruit, are formed of winding lines. The line of grace is found in the varied beauty of the hills, in the grandeur of the mountains, in things the most minute or magnificent. The beasts, the birds, the insects, and the fishes support or illustrate the maxim of the artist ; and in the shells which cover our shores, the most beautiful undulating lines are united with the most exquisite colours. Of woman's beauty and of man's gracefulness we may say the same. The heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, are all supporters of the universal principle—of which Hogarth claims the merit of being the discoverer.

Of the great artists of Greece and the eminent artists of Italy, he observes that they wrought in the express spirit of the great principle of nature—from the glorious instinct of genius more probably than from knowledge. Their works contain the line of beauty in its most natural and elegant forms, and he nowhere observed stiff and rigid lines in any of the highest productions. This was accomplished, he supposes, by imitating with great exactness the beauties

of nature. Michael Angelo, he imagines, had some notion of the existence of this principle, when he advised his scholar, Marcus de Siena, to make "a figure pyramidical, serpent-like, and multiplied by one, two, and three; in which precept the whole mystery of the art consisteth; for the greatest grace and life which a picture can have is, that it expresses motion, which painters call the spirit of a picture."

A book of so much pretension coming from a self-educated man, accompanied with numerous etchings illustrating the author's principles of excellence in art, and containing, moreover, some little satire upon portrait-painters and copiers of pictures, was not likely to go unchallenged. He expected to be laughed at by some, and ridiculed by others: in a little epigram he whimsically enough describes his own feelings:—

> "'What! a book, and by Hogarth! then, twenty to ten,
> All he's gained by the pencil he'll lose by the pen.'
> 'Perhaps it may be so—howe'er miss or hit,
> He will publish—here goes—it is double or quit.'"

Those who were hurt worst spoke first. It was not indeed likely that a man who openly scorned the mere mechanical productions of the easel, who thought and said that academies which instructed students in making new pictures from old ones were injurious to art, and that portrait-painting was unworthy of genius, would be allowed to publish such a bold lesson without opposition or remark. A storm of verse and prose assailed his heresy, and spared neither his works, his person, nor his fireside.

The truth of the principle of beauty was sharply questioned and severely ridiculed; and the authorship of the volume was itself ascribed to some literary friends. Hogarth modestly says, that he persuaded a friend to correct his language, and prepare his work for the press. It was urged that a man gross in conversation, unacquainted with literary composition, and of very humble scholarship, was unlikely to be the author of a work which,

to sustain their own theory, the critics acknowledged to be clever. It was remarked too, with some show of triumph, that he could not spell his native language, and specimens of careless or intentional misspelling were quoted from his prints. Even John Wilkes, long after the controversy had subsided, strove to renew the clamour by a fierce invective, in which he calls him "the humorous W. Hogarth, the supposed author of the 'Analysis of Beauty.' He never caught," says the veracious patriot, "a single idea of beauty, grace, or elegance; but, on the other hand, he never missed the least flaw in almost any production of nature or of art. This arose in some measure from his head, but much more from his heart. After 'Marriage-à-la-Mode,' the public wished for a series of prints of a 'Happy Marriage.' Hogarth made the attempt, but the rancour and malevolence of his mind made him very soon turn away with envy and disgust from objects of so pleasing contemplation, to dwell and feast a bad heart on others of a hateful cast, which he pursued, for he found them congenial, with the most unabating zeal, and the most unrelenting gall."

All such remarks might have been spared. Hogarth had natural genius enough to conceive, and knowledge sufficient to enable him to mature, the new discovered principle of beauty, and render it worthy of publication. That the skill and kindness of his friends suggested emendations there can be no doubt, since he says so himself; but no one can dispute the title to the work with him, and no critic of comprehension or candour will cast suspicion upon his claim of authorship, because he made blunders in syntax and mistakes in spelling. Men of great literary eminence might be named who made slips in both; nor have there been wanting men who denied to poets the merit of their own productions. Garth was accused of not writing his "Dispensary," and from Allan Ramsay some have tried to take away the honours of the "Gentle Shepherd." Time has disposed of all these objections, and allowed, in spite of the malice of Wilkes, that the "Analysis of Beauty" is

the work of Hogarth: but the truth of the principle which the work was composed to establish has not yet received universal sanction.

Of those who affected to laugh at the Analysis, the bitterest was Wilkes, but the most eminent was Walpole. "The book," he says, "is the failing of a visionary, whose eyes were so little open to his own deficiencies, that he believed he had discovered the principle of grace, and with the enthusiasm of a discoverer cried out, Eureka! This was his famous 'Line of Beauty,' the groundwork of his Analysis, a book which has many sensible hints and observations, but that did not carry the conviction nor meet the general acquiescence he expected. As he treated his contemporaries with scorn, they triumphed over him in turn, and imitated him to expose him. Many wretched burlesque prints came out to ridicule his system. There was a better answer to it in one of the two prints that he gave to illustrate his hypothesis. In the ball, had he confined himself to such outlines as compose awkwardness and deformity, he would have proved half his assertion; but he has added two samples of grace, in a young lord and lady, that are strikingly stiff and affected: they are a Bath beau and a country beauty." So writes Walpole: the principle of beauty, however, was not necessarily unfounded because the painter failed in creating two figures excelling in beauty and grace, any more than his heart was corrupt and envious because he did not choose to paint a "Happy Marriage."

Of what Hogarth himself thought of the excellence of his new discovery and the acrimony of his enemies, there is an ample account by his own hand. I select some characteristic passages. "No Egyptian hieroglyphic ever amused more than my 'Line of Beauty' did for a time. Painters and sculptors came to me to know the meaning of it, being as much puzzled with it as other people, till I explained it by publishing my Analysis. Then, indeed, and not till then, some found it out to be an old acquaintance of theirs, though the account they could give of its properties

was very near as satisfactory as that which a day-labourer who constantly uses the lever could give of that machine as a mechanical power." This is the language of a man at peace with himself, and satisfied with his success; the following is dictated by a heart much less at ease :—

"My preface and introduction to the Analysis contain a general explanation of the circumstances which led me to commence author; but this has not deterred my opponents from loading me with much gross, and, I think, unmerited obloquy. Among other crimes of which I am accused, it is asserted that I have abused the 'Great Masters;' this is far from being just. So far from attempting to lower the ancients, I have always thought, and it is universally admitted, that they knew some fundamental principles in nature which enabled them to produce works that have been the admiration of succeeding ages; but I have not allowed this merit to those *leaden-headed* imitators, who, having no consciousness of either symmetry or propriety, have attempted to *mend nature*, and, in their truly *ideal figures*, gave similar proportions to a Mercury and a Hercules."

Another and a better spirit influenced him in the following passage—he is proposing to seek the principles of beauty in nature, instead of looking for them in mere learning. His words are plain, direct, and convincing. "Nature is simple, plain, and true in all her works, and those who strictly adhere to her laws, and closely attend to her appearances in their infinite varieties, are guarded against any prejudicial bias from truth; while those who have seen many things that they cannot well understand, and read many books which they do not fully comprehend, notwithstanding all their parade of knowledge, are apt to wander about it and about it; perplexing themselves and their readers with the various opinions of other men. As to those painters who have written treatises on painting, they were in general too much taken up with giving rules for the operative part of the art, to enter into physical disquisitions on the nature of the objects. With respect to myself, I thought I was sufficiently grounded in the

principles of my profession to throw some new lights on the subject; and, though the pen was to me a new instrument, yet, as the mechanic at his loom may possibly give as satisfactory an account of the materials and composition of the rich brocade he weaves as the smooth-tongued mercer, surrounded with all his parade and showy silks, I trusted that I might make myself tolerably understood by those who would take the trouble of examining my book and prints together—for, as one makes use of signs to convey his meaning in a language of which he has little knowledge, I have occasionally had recourse to my pencil."

But to fix the fluctuating principles of taste—the object of the "Analysis of Beauty"—was a flight beyond the powers of Hogarth. Every master spirit that appears on the earth goes to work in his own peculiar way; and though the structures which he raises are founded in nature, yet they differ in the exterior effect and internal arrangement from what has preceded them, as the Gothic architecture differs from the Grecian. The rules which one man lays down for composition are overthrown by another, who forms his own laws—and these again are swept away by the next succeeding spirit, as readily as a wave of the sea obliterates words written on the sands. But if any man ever discovered the universal principle on which all works of lasting glory in art are constructed, it seems to have been Hogarth. The great law which he promulgates belongs to universal nature—it was in nature that he found it, and by nature he has explained it. The bird flies, the stream flows, the flower springs, the sun runs his course, and the ocean rolls his waves, all in accordance and conformity with his undulating line of beauty and grace. Men, whose feelings were imbued with nature, wrought by a kind of instinctive inspiration in the right way, when they executed those statues and paintings which continue to astonish the earth. Walpole was amazed to find that an old ballad-maker had obeyed, in "Gill Morrice," all the precepts of Horace—without having heard of the poet. In truth, nature dictates what is right to those

whose minds are lofty, and who passionately feel the subject of their meditation.

If Hogarth felt annoyed by the petulance of painters and critics, who sought to destroy his reputation, overturn his system, and wound the peace of his family, he must have been very sensibly gratified by the praise which poured in upon him from foreign parts, and from Englishmen of talent and intelligence. Amongst the latter, Warburton added his testimony to the merits of Hogarth in the following intrepid words :—"I was pleased," says the Bishop, in a letter to the artist, "that you have determined to give us your original and masterly thoughts on the great principles of your profession. You owe this to your country, for you are both an honour to your profession and a shame to that worthless crew professing vertù and connoisseurship; to whom all that grovel in the splendid poverty of wealth and taste are the miserable bubbles." It would appear from this that Warburton had seen the Analysis before publication. After this it would be unfair to withhold the praise of Benjamin West—a painter prudent in speech and frugal in commendation. "I remember, when I was a lad," says Smith, in his account of Nollekens, "asking the late venerable President West what he thought of Hogarth's 'Analysis of Beauty,' and his answer was—'It is a work of the highest value to every one studying the art. Hogarth was a strutting, consequential little man, and made himself many enemies by that book; but now that most of them are dead, it is examined by disinterested readers, unbiassed by personal animosities, and will be more and more read, studied, and understood.'"

The collection of pictures belonging to Sir Luke Schaub was dispersed in 1758, by public auction, when Sir Thomas Seabright became the proprietor of a "Sigismunda," imputed to Correggio, for the sum of £400. The effect which this circumstance had upon the mind of Hogarth is described by Walpole, in words which I dare not soften and cannot commend :—"From a contempt of the ignorant vertuosi of the age, and from indignation at the impudent

tricks of picture-dealers, whom he saw continually recommending and vending vile copies to bubble-collectors, and from having never studied—indeed, having seen few good pictures of—the great Italian masters, he persuaded himself that the praises bestowed on those glorious works were nothing but the effects of ignorance. He talked this language till he believed it; and having heard it often asserted, as is true, that time gives a mellowness to colours and improves them, he not only denied the proposition, but maintained that pictures only grew black and worse by age. He went farther—he determined to rival the ancients, and unfortunately chose one of the finest pictures in England as the subject of his competition. This was the celebrated 'Sigismunda' of Sir Luke Schaub, said to be painted by Correggio—probably by Furino—but no matter by whom. It is impossible to see the picture, or read Dryden's inimitable tale, and not feel that the same soul animated both. After many essays, Hogarth produced his 'Sigismunda,' but no more like Sigismunda than I to Hercules. Not to mention the wretchedness of the colouring, it was the representation of a maudlin strumpet just turned out of keeping; and, with eyes red with rage and usquebaugh, tearing off the ornaments her keeper had given her. To add to the disgust raised by such vulgar expression, her fingers were bloodied by her lover's heart, that lay before her like that of a sheep for her dinner."

This is severe, pointed, and untrue. The Sigismunda of Hogarth is not tearing off her ornaments, nor are her fingers bloodied by her lover's heart. It is said that the picture resembled Mrs. Hogarth, who was a very handsome woman; and to this circumstance Wilkes maliciously alludes in his unprincipled attack on her husband. "If the 'Sigismunda,'" says this polite patriot, "had a resemblance of anything ever seen on earth, or had the least pretence to either meaning or expression, it was what he had seen, or perhaps made—in real life—his own wife in an agony of passion; but of what passion no connoisseur could guess." That Mrs. Hogarth sat for the picture of

"Sigismunda" seems to have been known to conscientious John, and this is supported by that lady's conduct to Walpole. The noble biographer sent her a copy of his "Anecdotes," accompanied by a courtly and soothing note; but she was so much offended by his description of the "Sigismunda," that she took no notice of his present. The widow of the artist was poor; and an opinion so ill-natured —so depreciating—and so untrue, injured the property which she wished to sell: she loved, too, the memory of her husband, and resented in the dignity of silence the malicious and injurious attack. She considered the present as an insult offered when she had no one to protect her. I love her pride and reverence her affection.

Sir Richard Grosvenor, for whom the "Sigismunda" was painted, thought as unfavourably of it as Walpole himself. In Hogarth's memorandum-book the following account of the matter is written by his own hand—it seems fair and candid, and has not been contradicted:—

"This transaction having given rise to many ridiculous falsehoods, the following unvarnished tale will set all in its true light. The picture of 'Sigismunda' was painted at the earnest request of Sir Richard Grosvenor, now Lord Grosvenor, in the year 1759, at a time when Mr. Hogarth had fully determined to leave off painting, partly on account of ease and retirement, but more particularly because he had found by thirty years' experience that his pictures, except in an instance or two, had not produced him one quarter of the profit which arose from his engravings. However, the flattering compliments, as well as generous offers made him by the above gentleman, who was immensely rich, prevailed upon the unwary artist to undertake this difficult subject, which (being seen and fully approved of by his lordship whilst in hand) was, after much time and the utmost efforts, finished—but how, the painter's death can only positively determine. The price required for it was therefore not on account of its value as a picture, but proportioned to the value of the time it took in painting."

The statement is further confirmed by the following

letter, which the artist addressed to Sir Richard Grosvenor —"I have done all I can to the picture of 'Sigismunda;' you may remember you was pleased to say you would give me what price I should think fit to set upon whatever I would paint for you; and, at the same time that you made this generous offer, I, in return, made it my request that you would use no ceremony in refusing the picture when done, if you should not be thoroughly satisfied with it. This you promised should be as I pleased, which I now entreat you would comply with, without the least hesitation, if you think four hundred pounds too much money for it. One more favour I have to beg, which is, that you will determine on this matter as soon as you can conveniently, that I may resolve whether I shall go on with another picture for Mr. Hoare the banker on the same terms, or stop here."

The answer of Sir Richard Grosvenor was short—and could not fail to wound deeply the feelings of Hogarth:—"I should sooner have answered yours of the 13th instant," says this patron of native genius, "but have been mostly out of town. I understand by it that you have a commission from Mr. Hoare for a picture. If he should have taken a fancy to the 'Sigismunda,' I have no sort of objection to your letting him have it; for I really think the performance so striking and inimitable, that the constantly having it before one's eyes would be too often occasioning melancholy ideas to arise in one's mind, which a curtain's being drawn before it would not diminish the least." This is sufficiently lordly and insulting. That Hogarth endured it without retort may be imputed either to pride or to the love of repose—for age and its infirmities were now coming upon him. It made, however, a deep impression upon his mind, which even the controversy, into which he was soon afterwards precipitated, with Churchill and Wilkes, could not efface. Like his uncle, the artist was something of a poet, and the following lines, upon the conduct of his patron, are not without cleverness; they possess a rarer merit—good nature. He alludes to the "Sigismunda."

"Nay, 'tis so moving, that the knight
Can't even bear it in his sight;
Then who would tears so dearly buy,
As give four hundred pounds to cry?
I own he chose the prudent part,
Rather to break his word than heart,
And yet, methinks, 'tis ticklish dealing
With one so delicate in feeling."

"Sigismunda," thus refused by the person for whom it was painted, and traduced and ridiculed by the artists of the day, remained on Hogarth's hands. Of its excellence he certainly had some doubts; yet his pride forbade him to allow this—he desired his widow not to dispose of it for less than five hundred pounds. But a picture, like a play, once condemned—seldom rises into popularity. His injunctions were obeyed, nor was the "Sigismunda" sold till the death of Mrs. Hogarth, when it was bought by Boydell.

I have now to give some account of Hogarth's quarrel with Churchill and Wilkes—a quarrel which embittered the few remaining days of the great artist, and brought no increase of reputation to his adversaries. The pencil and pen of the painter, and the pens of the politician and the poet, were eagerly dipped in the gall of this bitter dispute. —Let us attend to Hogarth's words first—he speaks coolly and reasonably. He alludes first to the abuse which he says the expounders of the mysteries of old pictures had heaped on his "Sigismunda," and the influence it had on his health:—"However mean the vendor of poisons may be, the mineral is destructive—to me its operation was troublesome enough. Ill-nature spread so fast, that now was the time for every little dog in the profession to bark and revive the old spleen which appeared at the time of the 'Analysis.' The anxiety that attends endeavouring to recollect ideas long dormant, and the misfortunes which clung to this transaction coming on at a time when nature demands quiet, and something besides, exercise to cheer it, added to my long sedentary life, brought on an illness which continued twelve months. But when I got well

enough to ride on horseback, I soon recovered. This being at a period when war abroad and contention at home engrossed every one's mind, prints were thrown into the background, and the stagnation rendered it necessary that I should do some *timed thing*, to recover my lost time and stop a gap in my income. This drew forth my print of 'The Times,' a subject which tended to the restoration of peace and unanimity, and put the opposers of those humane objects in a light which gave great offence to those who were trying to ferment destruction in the minds of the populace."

The account rendered by Wilkes himself corresponds pretty nearly with that of Hogarth:—"Wilkes (says the Patriot himself) was waging open war with the Scottish minister, Lord Bute, when Hogarth sacrificed private friendship at the altar of party madness, and lent his aid to the government. A friend informed him that the painter was about to publish a print, satirising Pitt, Temple, Churchill, and himself. He remonstrated, and remarked, that the subjects suitable for his pencil were those of an universal or moral nature. The answer was, that neither Wilkes nor Churchill were included in the satire, though Pitt and Temple were. On this Wilkes informed Hogarth, that he should never resent reflections on himself, but if his friends were attacked, he should then deem himself wounded in the most sensible part, and avenge their cause as well as he was able. 'The Times' appeared, and was instantly followed by an attack in the 'North Briton' on 'The King's Sergeant-Painter, William Hogarth.'"

The attack was sharp and malicious—and Hogarth was not a person to be bearded with impunity. It would seem, however, that he had not anticipated any resentment on the part of Wilkes and Churchill, whose persons his satire had spared, and with whom he lived in a sort of friendly intercourse, resembling an armed neutrality. Wilkes, with unconscious naïveté, when he heard of the contemplated assault upon him and his friends, requested Hogarth to meddle with *moral* subjects—and as the same request suited Churchill, it was made in both their names. Precious

advice to Hogarth! He had poured out his strength, from youth to age, on profligacy, male and female—he had rebuked the folly of popular projectors—read a lesson, and a terrible one, to the heartless alliances which rank forms with riches—attacked the House of Commons in the corrupt elections of members of parliament—and, at the hazard of his sovereign's displeasure, satirised the royal guards. Hogarth now held the situation of sergeant-painter to the king, and might think himself justified, if not called upon, in defending the government. "The Times" at any rate presented a fit subject for humorous satire, and he was not sparing. And for Wilkes—whose whole life was one systematic and continual act of aggression against others, who had devoted himself to the service of a faction, and spared neither wit nor falsehood in furthering of his cause—for him to order Hogarth to relinquish his own constant satiric employment, and leave to him a monopoly of party bitterness, seems a strange and romantic demand.

When the venomous article in the "North Briton" appeared, Hogarth, who had not then attacked Wilkes, felt deeply the insinuations which it contained, both in a domestic and a loyal sense, and sought immediate revenge. What the pen was to the politician, the pencil was to the artist, and he accordingly produced that celebrated piece, which can scarcely be called a caricature, since it represents strongly, but truly, the bodily and mental image of John Wilkes. The artist has placed in the civic chair this patron saint of purity and liberty—a mark for perpetual laughter and loathing. For what he thought of his work we have his own words:—"My friends advised me," says Hogarth, "to laugh at the nonsense of party writing—who would mind it? But I could not rest; for

> "'He that filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed.'"

Such being my feelings, I wished to return the compliment, and turn it to some advantage. This renowned patriot's

portrait, drawn as like as I could as to features, and marked with some indications of his mind, answered my purpose. The ridiculous was apparent to every eye. A Brutus—a saviour of his country—with such an aspect—was so arrant a farce, that, though it gave rise to much laughter in the lookers-on, it galled both him and his adherents. This was proved by the papers being crammed every day with invectives against the artist, till the town grew sick of thus seeing me always at full length. Churchill, Wilkes's toad-eater, put the 'North Briton' into verse in an 'Epistle to Hogarth;' but as the abuse was precisely the same, except a little poetical heightening, it made no impression, but perhaps effaced or weakened the black strokes of the 'North Briton.' However, having an old plate by me, with some parts ready sunk as a background and a dog, I began to consider how I could turn so much work laid aside to some account—and so patched up a print of Master Churchill in the character of a bear. The pleasure and pecuniary advantage derived from these two engravings, together with occasionally riding on horseback, restored me to as much health as can be expected at my time of life."

Of the attack by Churchill, Hogarth speaks lightly—and with reason. The poet's character entitled him to take no such liberty with a man of genius, whose name was spotless: he had first disgraced the clerical character by his libertinism, and afterwards flung it aside in scorn and contempt of all decorum; he then commenced satirist by profession, with great success, and during a short and loose life published various poems of very unequal merits, though all vehement, bitter, and distinguished by a vigorous swing of versification, recalling a shadow at least of the charm of Dryden. Licentious manners, with wit at will, made Churchill welcome to Wilkes, a man as gay, as witty, and as loose as himself. The abuse of such a personage ought not to have been very formidable, but his popularity made it so; and with the buyers and quoters of his libels be the blame:—"Hogarth," he thus writes to Wilkes, "has broke into my pale of

private life, and set that example of illiberality which I wanted. I intend an elegy on him, supposing him dead; but —— (naming a courtesan) tells me, with a kiss, that he will be really dead before it comes out, for that I have already killed him. How sweet is flattery from the woman we love!"

The consistency of Churchill no one can praise; the malevolence of his nature all must condemn. Of Hogarth he had already written very sharp and venomous things, and had pulled him down, as he boasted and imagined, to the brink of the grave, before the artist moved his pencil against him. In his celebrated epistle he had accused the great painter of being envious, jealous, and vain; of liking his own works, and disliking those of the ancients; and, finally, of being weak, helpless, and grey-headed; and yet, when Hogarth retaliates in a feeble performance, the poet cries out in an ecstasy—"He has broken into my pale of private life, has set the example of illiberality which I wanted, and, as he is dying from the effects of my former chastisement, I shall hasten his decease by writing his elegy." An attack such as this came ungracefully from a man so impure as Churchill. He writes the atrocious letter which I have quoted, with his concubine at his side, to reward his satire with her purchased caresses. Wilkes says truly, in allusion to his own portrait, that he did not make himself, and cared little about the beauty of the case that contained his soul; neither did Hogarth make himself old—yet Churchill exults in the declining health and old age of Hogarth, and rejoices that his enemy is nigh the grave. The green ear is spared sometimes no more than the ripe—the youthful poet was near his own. Milton was not unwilling to claim the merit of having shortened the life of Salmasius, and Churchill had such faith in the terrors of his own verse, that his vanity was pleased when the death of Hogarth was imputed to his satire. On the whole, this quarrel showed more venom than wit:—"Never," says Walpole, "did two angry men of their abilities throw mud with less dexterity."

The print of "The Times," which occasioned these invec-

tives, verses, and caricatures, is a performance exclusively political, and therefore of local and temporary interest. We must view it through the vista of the year 1764, and not with the hope that general knowledge of nature will supply us with skill to feel and comprehend it. To those unacquainted with the bickerings, and heartburnings, and political manœuvrings of those shifting and slippery times, the print will appear as a ridiculous mystery, or an unintelligible riddle. It was intended as a satire upon Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham—a man of commanding eloquence and astonishing energy of mind; but who was accused of being more charmed with the applause of the mob than became one aspiring to the rule of a mighty nation.

The last work of Hogarth was worthy of his genius, and is known to the world by the title of "Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism." It was the intention of the artist to give a literal representation of the strange effects resulting from literal and low conceptions of sacred things; as also of the idolatrous tendency of pictures in churches, and prints in religious books. To exemplify this he had not far to travel; the more grovelling of the sectaries—they whose enthusiastic delusions Bishop Lavington terms "religion run mad"—supplied the first; the Church of Rome—the old queen and mother of hypocrisy and corruption—furnished the rest.

He has pictured forth a fierce preacher and a startled congregation. Over the heads of his audience the divine shakes a god with his right hand, holding a devil as a reserve in his left, to intimate that should the former fail to draw them to godliness, with the latter will be their portion. He thinks, with Burns, that,

> "The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,
> To hold the wretch in order."

His looks speak plainly—and never did fanatic preside over a congregation more devoutly delirious. One hearer has sprung to his feet in a kind of agony of rapture; the hair of a second has risen fairly on end, and seems resolved

to stand; a third has fallen into a swoon; a fourth hugs an image with peculiar ecstasy; a fifth—a female devotee—faints, and falls back in a very ecstatic manner; while the sixth, one of the soft sex, whose celestial visions, like those of Saint Theresa, suffer discredit by the loose company she keeps, has got a male devotee at her left hand, whose touches have shaken her sanctity so much, that she is dropping the image of her patron saint from her bosom. A Turk looks in at the window, smoking his cigar, and seemingly highly pleased at the sight of superstition which surpasses his own.—The burlesque of Hogarth, after all, goes no farther than the seriousness of others. "Over a Popish altar at Worms," says Burnet, "there is a picture one would think invented to ridicule transubstantiation. There is a windmill, and the Virgin Mary throws Christ into the hopper, and he comes out at the eye of the mill all in wafers, which a priest takes up to give to the people."

But the time was now approaching when superstition and folly and vice were to be relieved from the satiric pencil which had awed them so long—the health of Hogarth began to decline. He was aware of this, and purchased a small house at Chiswick, to which he retired during the summer, amusing himself with making slight sketches and retouching his plates. This house stood till lately on a very pretty spot; but the demon of building came into the neighbourhood, choked up the garden, and destroyed the secluded beauty of Hogarth's cottage. The garden, well stored with walnut, mulberry, and apple trees, contained a small study, with a headstone placed over a favourite bull-finch, on which the artist had etched the bird's head and written an epitaph. The cottage contained many snug rooms, and was but yesterday the residence of a man of learning and genius—Mr Cary, the translator of Dante. The change of scene, the free fresh air, and exercise on horseback, had for a while a favourable influence on Hogarth's health; but he complained that he was no longer able to think with the readiness, and work with the elasticity of spirit, of his earlier years. The friends of the

artist observed, and lamented, this falling away; his enemies hastened to congratulate Churchill and Wilkes on the success of their malevolence; and these men were capable of rejoicing in the belief that the work of nature was their own.

Though the health of Hogarth was declining, his spirits and powers of humour did not forsake him. In one of his memorandum books he remarks—"I can safely assert that I have invariably endeavoured to make those about me tolerably happy; and my greatest enemy cannot say I ever did an intentional injury; though, without ostentation, I could produce many instances of men that have been essentially benefited by me. What may follow, God knows." This was written nigh the close of his life, and seems entitled to the respect of a rigid self-examination; a confession which has a sacred air deserves confidence. To Wilkes, on the whole, rather than to Churchill, I must impute the vexation which aggravated his illness. Whatever merit there may be in disturbing the latter days of a man of genius, and in pouring additional bitterness into the parting cup, must be conceded to the former:—"One, till now," thus Hogarth writes, "rather my friend and flatterer, attacked me in so infamous and malign a style, that he himself, when pushed even by his best friends, was driven to so poor an excuse as to say he was drunk when he wrote it. Being at that time very weak, and in a kind of slow fever, it could not but seize on a feeling mind." It would, however, be unjust to deny that Churchill did all he could to depreciate the genius and infest the dying bed of Hogarth. In his poem of "Independence," published in the last week of September 1764, he contemptuously considers him as already in the grave: these are his words—

> "Hogarth would draw him, envy must allow,
> E'en to the life, were Hogarth living now."

It is painful enough to contemplate a sharp and malicious spirit anticipating the grave, and exulting over a dying man;—but it is still more sorrowful to think that the

profligate Churchill has been commended for the cowardly rancour with which he thus insulted one so far superior to himself in worth as well as in genius.

Hogarth left Chiswick on the 25th of October 1764, and returned to his residence in Leicester Square. He was very weak, yet exceedingly cheerful; for as the decline of his health was slow, he experienced no violent attacks—nature was silently giving way; his understanding continued clear, he had full possession of his mental faculties, but wanted the vigour to exert them. With the nature of his disorder no physician seems to have made himself acquainted; nor is there any account of who attended him; yet we must not suppose that he was without the benefit of medical advice, or that he had no faith in physic. Next day, having received an agreeable letter from Dr. Franklin, he rough-wrote an answer, and finding himself exhausted, retired to bed. He had lain but a short while when he was seized with a vomiting, and, starting up, rung the bell with such violence that he broke it in pieces. Mary Lewis, a worthy and affectionate relative, came and supported him in her arms till, after two hours' suffering, he expired, from a suffusion of blood among the arteries of the heart.

Hogarth was buried without any ostentation in the churchyard of Chiswick, where a monument, with the family arms, was erected to his memory, and inscribed with the following words:—"Here lieth the body of William Hogarth, Esq., who died October the 26th, 1764, aged sixty-seven years." A mask, a laurel wreath, a palette, pencils, and book, inscribed Analysis of Beauty, are carved on one side of the monument, accompanied by the following verses by Garrick:—

"Farewell, great painter of mankind!
Who reach'd the noblest point of art,
Whose pictured morals charm the mind,
And through the eye correct the heart.
If Genius fire thee, reader, stay,
If nature touch thee, drop a tear,
If neither move thee—turn away—
For Hogarth's honour'd dust lies here."

Another and a higher hand, that of Dr. Johnson, supplied an epitaph more to the purpose, but still unworthy :—

> "The hand of him here torpid lies
> That drew the essential forms of grace:
> Here closed in death the attentive eyes
> That saw the manners in the face."

His sister Ann followed him to the grave in 1771, and his wife, who loved him living, and honoured him dead, was laid beside him, in November 1789, in the eightieth year of her age—and there was an end of the House of Hogarth.

William Hogarth was rather below the middle size; his eye was peculiarly bright and piercing; his look shrewd, sarcastic, and intelligent; the forehead high and round. An accident in his youth had left a scar on his brow, and he liked to wear his hat raised so as to display it. He was active in person, bustling in manner, and fond of affecting a little state and importance. He was of a temper cheerful, joyous, and companionable; fond of mirth and good-fellowship, desirous of saying strong and pointed things;—ardent in friendship—and in resentment. His lively conversation—his knowledge of character—his readiness of speech—and quickness of retort, made many covet his company who were sometimes the objects of his satire; but he employed his wit on those who were present, and spared or defended the absent. His personal spirit was equal to his satiric talents; he provoked, with his pencil, the temper of those whom it was not prudent to offend; with him no vice nor folly found shelter behind wealth, or rank, or power. As to the license of his tongue, he himself often said that he never uttered that sentence about a living man which he would not repeat gladly to his face: as to his works, he always felt conscious of their merit, and predicted with equal openness that his name would descend with no decrease of honour to posterity. He loved state in his dress, good order in his household, and the success of his works enabled him to indulge in the luxuries of a good table and pleasant guests.

No one, save Wilkes, ever questioned his domestic serenity; and his insinuation, which I shall not repeat, appears to have been made without the slightest cause, and for the sake of saying something sharp and annoying. He was a good husband, and Jane Thornhill was an indulgent wife. He felt the injurious insinuations of Wilkes chiefly on his wife's account; and his widow resented the discourteous language of Walpole, and the coarse invectives of Steevens, with a temper and a calmness which command all respect.

"In his relations of husband, brother, friend, and master," says Ireland, "he was kind, generous, sincere, and indulgent; in diet abstemious, but in his hospitalities, though devoid of ostentation, liberal and free-hearted: not parsimonious, yet frugal;—but so comparatively small were the rewards then paid to artists, that after the labour of a long life he left a very inconsiderable sum to his widow, with whom he must have received a large portion." To this Steevens reluctantly adds, that Hogarth was a punctual paymaster—was uniformly kind to his sisters and to his cousin, Mary Lewis;—and—what I hold, though last, not least—that his domestics had remained many years in his service, and that he painted all their portraits and hung them up in his house.

By her husband's will Mrs. Hogarth received the sole property of his numerous plates, and the copyright was secured to her for twenty years by Act of Parliament. There were seventy-two plates—from which such a number of impressions were regularly sold as produced a very respectable annual income. But she outlived the period of her right; and, indeed, even before this was the case, through the fluctuation of public taste, the sale of the prints had so much diminished as to reduce Mrs. Hogarth to the border of want. The interposition of the king with the Royal Academy at length obtained for her an annuity of £40, which she lived but two years to enjoy.

Steevens, a person who misconceived Hogarth's genius,

since he said it was exclusively comic, and who was therefore likely to misunderstand his character, has described him as a man whose whole powers of pleasing were confined to his pencil—whose manners were gross and uncultivated—whose social ambition aspired no higher than to shine in a club of mechanics, and who was rarely admitted into polite circles. Much of this cannot be true. The society into which his profession threw him was often of a high order; he had painted portraits and family conversation-pieces for many years; he had corresponded with and kept the company of men eminent for rank and talent; and his letters to Lord Charlemont and Richard Lord Grosvenor are distinguished for their courtesy and forbearance. He had sat, too, with Gray the poet at the table of Walpole; and Walpole himself, the biographer of the artist, and one unlikely to forget a breach of decorum or signal grossness in conversation, since it would have embellished the portraiture he was soon to draw, has been silent. The account which West gave of his being a little, bustling and important man—his love of dress and good order—the state which he affected—for he kept his carriage—and his very love of speaking of early hardships in contrast to his present condition, all these circumstances seem to contradict the testimony of Steevens.

Nor is the opinion of this person entitled to much more consideration—when, upon the subject of the *indelicacy* of the works of Hogarth, he opposes the decision of Walpole. "When the Flemish painters attempt humour," says the latter, "it is by making a drunkard vomit; they take evacuations for jokes; and when they make us sick, they think they make us laugh. A boor hugging a frightful frow is a frequent incident even in the works of Teniers. The views of Hogarth were more generous and extensive—mirth coloured his pictures, but benevolence designed them—he smiled like Socrates, that men might not be offended at his lectures, and might learn to laugh at their own follies." This sensible and accurate estimate displeased Steevens, who proceeded to examine into the grossnesses

and indelicacies, real and imaginary, of a man whom he sought to dissect rather than criticise; and in this impure pursuit he is gratified with the detection of open—even of dawning delinquencies. The account of his discoveries may be very briefly dismissed; they are few and inconsiderable in regard to so voluminous an artist, and they are such as naturally presented themselves in works which had a higher aim, as a picture of vice mingles with the sermon which brands and crushes it. Indeed, it is wonderful that these blemishes are so few and so trivial. In grappling with folly, and in combating with crimes, he was compelled to reveal the nature of that which he proposed to satirise; he was obliged to set up sin in its high place, before he could crown it with infamy. He shows depravity for the sake of amending it—the Flemings exhibited indecency for our amusement—and it was Mr. Steevens's own fault that he could not see the distinction.

Of Hogarth many anecdotes are related—some are trivial and unimportant, others refer to his character and habits and modes of study; I shall select a few of the latter, as the reader may be desirous to see the first eminent artist whom our country produced as others saw him, and to know how he looked among his brethren of the pencil and the graver.

Hogarth treated those who sat for their portraits with a courtesy which is not always practised now. "When I sat to Hogarth," said Mr. Cole, "the custom of giving vails to servants was not discontinued. On taking leave of the painter at the door, I offered his servant a small gratuity, but the man very politely refused it, telling me it would be as much as the loss of his place if his master knew it. This was so uncommon and so liberal in a man of Hogarth's profession at that time of day, that it much struck me, as nothing of the kind had happened to me before." Nor is it likely that such a thing would happen again;—Sir Joshua Reynolds gave his servant £6 annually of wages, and offered him £100 a-year for the *door!*

It was Hogarth's custom to sketch out on the spot any remarkable face which struck him, and of which he wished to preserve an accurate remembrance. He was once observed in the Bedford Coffee-house drawing something with a pencil on the nail of his left thumb; he held it up to a friend who accompanied him—it was the face, and a very singular one, of a person in the same room—the likeness was excellent. He had dined with some friends at a tavern, and as he threw his cloak about him to be gone, he observed his friend, Ben Read, sound asleep, and presenting a most ridiculous physiognomy: Hogarth eyed him for a moment, and saying softly, "Heavens, what a character!" called for pen and ink, and drew his portrait without sitting down—a curious and clever likeness, and still existing.

It was in a temporary summer residence at Isleworth that he painted the "Rake's Progress." The crowd of visitors to his study was immense. He often asked them if they knew for whom one or another figure in the picture was designed, and when they guessed wrong he set them right. It was generally believed that the heads were chiefly portraits of low characters well known in town. In the "Miser's Feast" he introduced Sir Isaac Shard, a person proverbially avaricious; his son, a young man of spirit, heard of this, and calling at the painter's, requested to see the picture. The young man asked the servant whether that old figure was intended for any particular person, who answered it was thought to be very like one Sir Isaac Shard, whereupon he drew his sword and slashed the canvas. Hogarth heard the bustle, and was very angry. Young Shard said, "You have taken an unwarrantable license; I am the injured party's son, and ready to defend my conduct at law." He went away, and was never afterwards molested.

With a dissatisfied sitter the artist was more fortunate. A nobleman of ungainly looks and a little deformed sat for his picture; Hogarth made a faithful likeness according to the receipt of Oliver Cromwell; the peer was offended with

this want of courtesy in a man by profession a flatterer, and refused to pay for the picture, or to take it home. Hogarth was nettled, and informed his lordship, that unless he sent for it within three days, he should dispose of it, with the addition of a tail, to Hare the wild-beast man. The picture was instantly paid for, removed, and destroyed. A similar story is related of Sir Peter Lely.

Concerning Hogarth's vanity, Mr. Belchoir, a surgeon of some note, told the following story to Nichols, whose ear was a little too open to anything that confirmed Steevens's theory of the artist's ignorance and want of delicacy. "Hogarth, being at dinner with Dr. Cheselden and some other company, was informed that John Freke, surgeon of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, had asserted in Dick's Coffee-house that Greene was as eminent in composition as Handel. 'That fellow, Freke,' cried Hogarth, 'is always shooting his bolt absurdly one way or another. Handel is a giant in music, Greene only a light Florimel kind of composer.' 'Ay, but,' said the other, 'Freke declared you were as good a portrait-painter as Vandyke.' 'There he was in the right,' quoth Hogarth; 'and so I am, give me but my time and let me choose my subject.'"

With Dr. Hoadley, who corrected the manuscript of the "Analysis of Beauty" for the press, Hogarth was on such friendly terms that he was admitted into one of the private theatrical exhibitions which the doctor loved, and was appointed to perform, along with Garrick and his entertainer, a parody on that scene in Julius Cæsar where the ghost appears to Brutus. Hogarth personated the spectre; but so unretentive (we are told) was his memory, that though the speech consisted only of two lines he was unable to get them by heart, and his facetious associates wrote them on an illuminated lantern, that he might read them when he came upon the stage. Such is the way in which anecdotes are manufactured, and conclusions of absence or imbecility drawn. The speech of the ghost written on the paper lantern formed part of the humour of the burlesque. Men, dull in comprehending the eccentricities of genius, set

down what passes their own understanding to the account of the other's stupidity.

His thoughts were so much employed on scenes which he had just witnessed, or on works which he contemplated, that he sometimes had neither eyes nor ears for anything else; this has subjected him to the charge of utter absence of mind. "At table," says Nichols, "he would sometimes turn his chair round as if he had finished eating, and as suddenly would re-turn it and fall to his meal again." According to this writer, soon after our artist set up his carriage, he went to visit Beckford, who was then Lord Mayor; the day became stormy during the interview; and when Hogarth took his leave, he went out at a wrong door —forgot that he had a carriage—could not find a hackney-coach—and came home wet to the skin, to the astonishment of his wife. This is a good story—and it *may* be true. When Fonthill, the residence of Beckford, was burnt, five out of six of the paintings of "The Harlot's Progress" were unfortunately consumed. The whole series of the "Rake's Progress" escaped into the safe keeping of John Soane, the architect, together with "The Four Election Pictures." For the former he gave 570 guineas—for the latter £1,732.

Accompanying the prints of Hogarth's favourite works appeared explanations in verse, sometimes with the names of the authors, but oftener without, and all alike distinguished by weakness and want of that graphic accuracy which marked the engravings. London was at that time infested with swarms of wandering verse-makers, who wrote rhymes on occasions of public mourning or private distress, and who supplied printsellers with jingling commendations of the works which they published. They wrote epigrams for half-a-crown each—a fair price for four wretched lines. From such men Hogarth is supposed to have obtained many of the verses which are attached to his prints. But less charitable persons have ascribed them all to himself.

Heidegger, a Swiss, and the Thersites of his day, had a face beyond the reach of caricature: his portrait by Hogarth

is nature without addition or exaggeration, and it appears in all its hideousness—

"Something between a Heidegger and owl"—

in the little humorous print of the "Masquerade." This man obtained the management of the Opera House, was countenanced by the court, and amassed a fortune. Being once asked in company what nation had the greatest ingenuity—"The Swiss!" exclaimed Heidegger. "I came to England without a farthing, where I gain five thousand a-year, and spend it: now I defy the cleverest of you all to do the same in Switzerland."

Hogarth was fond of making experiments in his profession. He resolved to finish the engraving of the first print of the "Election," without taking a proof to ascertain the success of his labours. He had nearly spoiled the plate, and was so affected with the misadventure that he exclaimed, "I am ruined." He soon, however, proceeded to repair the damage which his haste or obstinacy had caused, and with such good fortune that the print in question is one of the clearest and cleverest of all his productions.

"When Barry, the painter," says Smith, "was asked if he had ever seen Hogarth, 'Yes—once,' he replied. 'I was walking with Joe Nollekens through Cranbourne Alley, when he exclaimed, 'There! there's Hogarth.' 'What,' said I, 'that little man in a sky-blue coat?' Off I ran, and though I lost sight of him only for a moment or two, when I turned the corner into Castle Street he was patting one of two quarrelling boys on the back, and looking steadfastly at the expression in the coward's face, cried, 'Damn him, if I would take it of him—at him again!'"*

* It is almost impossible that this story can be true. Barry arrived in London some time in 1764, and Hogarth died in the October of that same year. Moreover, Nollekens went to Italy in 1760, and did not return until 1770, therefore could never have seen Barry on English soil until six years after Hogarth's death. The story is told in Smith's "Nollekens," which we have already seen is an untrustworthy authority.

The character of William Hogarth as a man is to be sought for in his conduct, and in the opinions of his more dispassionate contemporaries; his character as an artist is to be gathered from numerous works, at once original and unrivalled. His fame has flown far and wide; his skill as an engraver spread his reputation as a painter; and all who love the dramatic representation of actual life —all who have hearts to be gladdened by humour—all who are pleased with judicious and well-directed satire—all who are charmed with the ludicrous looks of popular folly —and all who can be moved with the pathos of human suffering—are admirers of Hogarth. That his works are unlike those of other men is his merit, not his fault. He belonged to no school of art; he was the produce of no academy; no man living or dead had any share in forming his mind, or in rendering his hand skilful. He was the spontaneous offspring of the graphic spirit of his country, as native to the art of England as independence is, and he may be fairly called, in his own walk, the first-born of her spirit.

He painted life as he saw it. He gives no visions of bygone things—no splendid images of ancient manners; he regards neither the historian's page nor the poet's song. He was contented with the occurrences of the passing day —with the folly or the sin of the hour; to the garb and fashion of the moment, however, he adds story and sentiment for all time.

The morality of Hogarth has been questioned; and indeed the like has befallen Crabbe. We may smile as we look at his works, and we may laugh—all this is true:— the victims whom Hogarth conducts pass through many varied scenes of folly, and commit many absurdities; but the spectacle saddens as we move along, and if we commence in mirth, we are overwhelmed with sorrow at last. His object was to insinuate the excellence of virtue by proving the hideousness of vice;—and, if he has failed, who has succeeded? As to other charges, preferred by the malice of his contemporaries, time and fame have united in

disproving them. He has been accused of want of knowledge in the human form, and of grace and serenity of expression. There is some truth in this, perhaps; but the peculiar character of his pictures required mental vigour rather than external beauty, and serene Madonna-like loveliness could not find a place among the follies and frivolities of the passing scene. He saw a way of his own to fame, and followed it; he scorned all imitation, and by words and works recommended nature for an example and a monitress in art.

His grammatical accuracy and skill in spelling have been doubted by men who are seldom satisfied with anything short of perfection; and they have added the accusation, that he was gross and unpolished. Must men of genius be examples of both bodily and mental perfection? Look at the varied works of Hogarth, and say could a man overflowing with such knowledge of men and manners be called illiterate or ignorant? He was of no college—but not therefore unlearned; he was of no academy—yet who will question his excellence in art? He acquired learning by his study of human nature—in his intercourse with the world—in his musings on the changes of seasons—and on the varying looks of the nation and the aspect of the universe. He drank at the great fountain of information, and went by the ancient road; and till it is shown that his works are without knowledge, I shall look on him as a well-informed man.

In his memorandums respecting the establishment of an Academy of Art in England he writes well and wisely. Voltaire asserts that, after the establishment of the French Academy, not one work of genius appeared, for all the painters became mannerists and imitators. Hogarth agrees with the acute Frenchman; he declares that "the institution will serve to raise and pension a few bustling and busy men, whose whole employment will be to tell a few simple students when a leg is too long or an arm too short. More (says Hogarth) will flock to the study of art than what genius sends; the hope of profit, or

the thirst of distinction will induce parents to push their offspring into the lecture-room, and many will appear and but few be worthy. The paintings of Italy form a sort of ornamental fringe to their gaudy religion, and Rome is the general store-shop of Europe. The arts owe much to Popery, and Popery owes much of its universality to the arts. The French have attained to a sort of foppish magnificence in art; in Holland selfishness is the ruling passion, and in England vanity is united with selfishness. Portrait-painting, therefore, has succeeded, and ever will succeed better in England than in any other country, and the demand will continue as new faces come into the market. Portrait-painting is one of the ministers of vanity, and vanity is a munificent patroness; historical painting seeks to revive the memory of the dead, and the dead are very indifferent paymasters. Paintings are plentiful enough in England to keep us from the study of nature; but students who confine their studies to the works of the dead, need never hope to live themselves; they will learn little more than the names of the painters: true painting can only be learnt in one school, and that is kept by nature." These are the written words of a man illiterate and gross, who was unacquainted with grammar and could not spell! In this free, clear, and pithy way, Hogarth handled the great question of public instruction in art, and his conduct has been imputed to envy of the growing fame of Sir Joshua Reynolds. If those sarcastic strictures arose from envy—of which I find no traces—the envy of Hogarth was met by the contempt of Reynolds; for never in all his letters and discourses does Sir Joshua, save once or so, and that with more of censure than of praise, allude even to the existence of his eminent contemporary.*

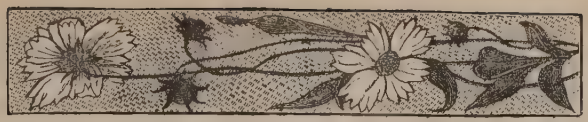
It is seldom that envy urges such sensible reasons for its opposition. Hogarth disliked a formal school, because

* A distinguished member of the Royal Academy remarked publicly on this passage in the first edition—that Sir Joshua might as well be censured for not naming Fielding and Richardson, as Hogarth was *no painter!*

he was the pupil of nature, and foresaw that students would flock to it from the feeling of trade rather than the impulse of genius, and that it would become a manufactory for conventional forms and hereditary graces. He satirised some of the dark masters, and laughed at—as well he might—their legions of saints and Madonnas. He saw their influence in England, and he lamented it and lampooned them; but he was not, therefore, insensible to the merits of the more eminent masters. Opulent collectors were filling their galleries with the religious paintings of the Romish Church, and vindicating their purchases by representing these works as the only patterns of all that is noble in art and worthy of imitation. Hogarth perceived that all this was not according to the natural spirit of the nation; he well knew that our island had not yet poured out its own original mind in art, as it had done in poetry; and he felt assured that such a time would come, if native genius were not overlaid systematically by mock patrons and false instructors. In this mood he looked coldly—too coldly, perhaps—on foreign art; and perhaps too fondly on his own productions. But even there, where vanity soonest misleads the judgment, he thought wisely. He contemplated his own works, not as things excellent in themselves, but as the rudiments of future excellence, and looked forward with the hope that some happier Hogarth would arise, and raise—on the foundation which he had laid—a perfect and lasting superstructure.

"As a *painter*," says Walpole, "Hogarth has slender merit." What is the merit of a painter? If it be to represent life—to give us an image of man—to exhibit the workings of his heart—to record the good and evil of his nature—to set in motion before us the very beings with whom earth is peopled—to shake us with mirth—to sadden us with woeful reflection—to please us with natural grouping, vivid action, and vigorous colouring—Hogarth has done all this; and if he that has done so be not a painter, who will show us one? I claim a signification as wide for the word painter as for the word poet. But

there seems a disposition to limit the former to those who have been formed under some peculiar course of study—and produced works in the fashion of such and such great masters. This I take to be mere pedantry; and that as well might all men be excluded from the rank of poets, who have not composed epics, dramas, odes, or elegies, according to the rules of the Greeks.



RICHARD WILSON.

Of the life of Richard Wilson little more is known than what is related by Wright; whose account, imperfect and unsatisfactory as it is, was sought for by its author in many sources, and procured with difficulty and fatigue. As the remembrance of the artist himself faded on men's memories, the character of his works began to rise in public estimation. Then, and not till then, the lovers of art perceived that the productions of an Englishman, who lived in want and died broken-hearted, equalled, in poetic conception and splendour of colouring, many of the works of those more fortunate painters, who had kings for their protectors, and princes and nobles for their companions.

He was the third son of a clergyman in Montgomeryshire, whose family was of old standing; and his mother was one of the Wynns of Leeswold—a name of great antiquity, and enriched with the blood of the kings of the principality. He was born in the year 1713. His love of art appeared early. How this came upon him, in a place where there were no paintings to awaken his emotions, we are not informed; but a slight cause will arouse a strong natural spirit. He loved, when a child, to trace figures of men and animals, with a burnt stick, upon the walls of the house; and his father seems to have been willing to encourage, rather than repress, this unprofitable propensity. But he must have carried his experiments much farther, and put them into a more alluring shape, before he succeeded in impressing a sense of his talents on his relation, Sir George Wynn, who took him—I know not at what age

—to London, and placed him under the care of one Wright, a painter of portraits, too obscure even for the notice of Walpole. His progress under such a master could be but little; and no better account can be rendered than that he lived by portraits, and was distinguished among his wretched contemporaries so far as to be employed to paint a picture of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, for their tutor, the Bishop of Norwich. This happened in 1748, when Wilson was thirty-five years old.

Wilson's portraits, whether numerous or not, are now forgotten, with the annual thousands which were then, as now, produced to meet the demand of new faces; nor were they marked, according to all but universal opinion, by any of those happy and graceful touches which please us so much in his landscapes. Edwards, indeed, in his "Anecdotes of Painters," asserts that in drawing a head he was not excelled by any of the portrait-painters of his time—that his treatment was bold and masterly, and his colouring in the style of Rembrandt; but Edwards is alone as to this matter.*

A great and salutary change was soon to be wrought in the character of his productions. In his six-and-thirtieth year he was enabled by his own savings and the aid of his friends to go to Italy, where his talents procured him notice, and his company was courted by men of sense and rank. He continued the study and practice of portrait-painting, and, it is said, with fair hopes of success, when an accident opened another avenue to fame, and shut up the way to fortune. Having waited one morning till he grew weary for the coming of Zucarelli, the artist, he painted, to beguile the time, a scene upon which the window of his friend looked, with so much grace and effect that Zucarelli was astonished, and inquired if he had studied landscape. Wilson replied that he had not. "Then I advise you,"

* A portrait in full length of J. H. Mortimer, by Richard Wilson, was some time ago in the possession of Mr. John Britton, who valued it at 150 guineas, and in 1842 wrote a pamphlet about it and the paintings and merits of Wilson in general.

(said the other) "to try—for you are sure of great success." The counsel of one friend was confirmed by the opinion of another. This was Vernet, a French painter—a man whose generosity was equal to his reputation, and that was very high. One day, while sitting in Wilson's painting-room, he was so struck with the peculiar beauty of a newly-finished landscape that he desired to become its proprietor, and offered in exchange one of his best pictures. This was much to the gratification of the other; the exchange was made, and with a liberality equally rare and commendable, Vernet placed his friend's picture in his exhibition-room, and when his own productions happened to be praised or purchased by English travellers, the generous Frenchman used to say, "Don't talk of my landscapes alone, when your own countryman, Wilson, paints so beautifully."

These praises, and an internal feeling of the merits of his new performances, induced Wilson to relinquish portrait-painting and proceed with landscape. He found himself better prepared for this new pursuit than he had imagined; he had been long insensibly storing his mind with the beauties of natural scenery, and the picturesque mountains and glens of his native Wales had been to him an academy when he was unconscious of their influence. He did not proceed upon that plan of study—much recommended, but little practised—of copying the old masters, with the hope of catching a corresponding inspiration; but he studied their works, and mastered their methods of attaining excellence, and compared them carefully with nature. By this means he caught the hue and character of Italian scenery, and steeped his spirit in its splendour. His landscapes are fanned with the pure air, warmed with the glowing suns, filled with the ruined temples, and sparkling with the wooded streams and tranquil lakes of that classic region. His reputation rose so fast that he obtained pupils. Mengs, out of regard for his genius, painted his portrait; and Wilson repaid this flattery with a fine landscape.

After a residence of six years abroad, he returned to England to try his fortune with his own countrymen; and

the commencement was promising. On his arrival in London, he took apartments on the north side of Covent Garden, where Lely, Kneller, and Thornhill had lived and laboured, and associated with all men distinguished for taste and talent. His picture of "Niobe" confirmed, if it did not increase, the reputation which had followed him from Italy, and his view of Rome raised him to a distinction not surely difficult at that time to attain—that of the ablest landscape-painter of his country. The Duke of Cumberland bought the first and the Marquis of Tavistock the second of these pieces: the prices have not been recorded, but they were probably low. He assisted in instituting the Royal Academy; and on the death of Hayman solicited and obtained the situation of librarian—a place of small profit, but not to be despised by one who had to inspire his countrymen with a new taste before he could expect to have a succession of purchasers.

The love of landscape-painting spread very slowly—so slowly that, after the sale of a few of his works among the more distinguished of the lovers of art, he could not find a market for the fruits of his study; and had the mortification of exhibiting pictures of unrivalled beauty before the eyes of his countrymen in vain. He soon began to feel that in relinquishing portrait-painting he had forsaken the way to wealth and fashionable distinction, and taken the road to certain want and unprofitable fame. The appeal which his original pursuit made to individual vanity was felt, and through it he had acquired a decent livelihood, which his present employment seemed to deny him. To paint the varied aspect of inanimate nature—to clothe the pastoral hills with flocks, to give wild-fowl to the lakes, ringdoves to the woods, blossoms to the boughs, verdure to the earth, and sunshine to the sky—is to paint landscape, it is true; but it is to paint it like a district surveyor, instead of grouping its picturesque beauties, and inspiring them with what the skilful in art call the sentiment of the scene. Wilson had a poet's feeling and a poet's eye, selected his scenes with judgment, and spread them out in beauty and

in all the fresh luxury of nature. He did for landscape what Reynolds did for faces—with equal genius but far different fortune. A fine scene, rendered still more lovely by the pencil of the artist, did not reward its flatterer with any of its productions either of oil, or corn, or cattle; as Kneller found dead men indifferent paymasters—so inanimate nature proved but a cold patroness to Wilson.

It was the misfortune of Wilson to be unappreciated in his own day; and he had the additional mortification of seeing works wholly unworthy of being ranked with his, admired by the public and purchased at large prices. The demand for the pictures of Barret was so great, that the income of that indifferent dauber rose to two thousand pounds a-year; and the equally weak landscapes of Smith of Chichester were of high value in the market—at the time when the works of Wilson were neglected and disregarded, and the great artist himself was sinking, in the midst of the capital, under obscurity, indigence, and dejection. He was reduced, by this capricious ignorance of the wealthy and the titled, to work for the meanest of mankind. Hogarth, as we have seen, sold some of his plates for half-a-crown a pound weight—and Wilson painted his "Ceyx and Alcyone" for a pot of beer and the remains of a Stilton cheese! * His chief resource for subsistence was in the sordid liberality of pawnbrokers, to whose hands many of his finest works were consigned wet

* From an eminent member of the Royal Academy I have received the following version of this story—to which I could add three others. I have retained in the text the most popular one.

"In the anecdote of Wilson's painting, the 'Ceyx and Alcyone,' there is a slight mistake. The Castle and Rock of the picture were painted *from* and not *for* a pot of porter and a Stilton cheese. From what I have repeatedly heard Farington say, it was not so much the low prices which Wilson got for his pictures, as the general want of employment, which he had to complain of. For such pictures as those of his which Farington had, and Constable has, he used to receive from ten to fifteen guineas, which, according to the value of money then, is quite equal to the prices received by almost any of us now. I won't name the exceptions—I can only say that I am not one."—A.C.

from the easel. One person, who had purchased many pictures from him, when urged by the unhappy artist to buy another, took him into his shop-garret, and, pointing to a pile of landscapes, said, "Why, look ye, Dick, you know I wish to oblige, but see! there are all the pictures I have paid you for these three years." To crown his disappointments—in a contest for fame with Smith of Chichester—the Royal Society decided against Wilson.

To account for the caprice of the public, or even for the imperfect taste of a Royal Society, is less difficult than to find a reason for the feelings of dislike, and even hostility, with which Wilson was regarded by Reynolds. We are told that the eminent landscape-painter, notwithstanding all the refinement and intelligence of his mind, was somewhat coarse and repulsive in his manners. He was indeed a lover of pleasant company, a drinker of ale and porter—one who loved boisterous mirth and rough humour: and such things are not always found in society which calls itself select. But what could the artist do? The man whose patrons are pawnbrokers instead of peers—whose works are paid in porter and cheese—whose pockets contain little copper and no gold—whose dress is coarse and his house ill-replenished—must seek such society as corresponds with his means and condition—he must be content to sit elsewhere than at a rich man's table covered with embossed plate. That the coarseness of his manners and the meanness of his appearance should give offence to the courtly Reynolds, is not to be wondered at—that they were the cause of his hostility I cannot believe, though this has often been asserted. Their dislike was, in fact, mutual; and I fear it must be imputed to something like jealousy.

In those moments of irritation and animosity, the cold, calm temper of Reynolds gave him a manifest advantage over an opponent irritable by nature, and soured and stung by disappointment and misfortune. The coarse and unskilful vehemence of *poor Richard* was no match for the cautious malignity of the president, who enjoyed the double

advantage of lowering his adversary's talents in social conversation, and *ex cathedrâ* in his discourses. Reynolds seems to have been a master in that courtly and malevolent art ascribed by Pope to Addison, of teaching others to sneer without sneering himself, and "damning with faint praise." As a specimen, I transcribe the following passage from one of the president's discourses:—

"Our ingenious academician, Wilson, has, I fear, been guilty, like many of his predecessors, of introducing gods and goddesses, ideal beings, into scenes which were by no means prepared to receive such personages. His landscapes were in reality too near common nature to admit supernatural objects. In consequence of this mistake in a very admirable picture of a storm which I have seen of his hand, many figures were introduced in the foreground, some in apparent distress, and some struck dead, as a spectator would naturally suppose, by the lightning, had not the painter injudiciously, as I think, rather chosen that their death should be imputed to a little Apollo who appears in the sky with his bent bow, and that these figures should be considered as the children of Niobe. The first idea that presents itself is that of wonder in seeing a figure in so uncommon a situation as that in which the Apollo is placed, for the clouds on which he kneels have not the appearance of being able to support him."

This criticism was uttered, indeed, when Wilson was in the grave, and when it could not hurt him personally; it nevertheless proves the insinuating nature of the critic's hostility; and that long and rooted dislike had made him shut his eyes on excellences to which he could not otherwise have been insensible. The man whose landscapes obtained him a high name for poetic feeling and elegant nature, was not likely to select a common scene for the tragic representation of the death of Niobe and her children; and, as that mournful story was his subject, it was necessary to people the landscape with the proper historical actors. Niobe and her offspring are on earth—their destroyer is in heaven; and, as the scene is very grand and

magnificent, I cannot conceive that anything is out of place or out of character. The Apollo is proportioned to the picture, and seems too buoyant and aërial to need even the support of a cloud; neither is he kneeling, but floating majestically away on one of those boding clouds which accompany thunder. While accusing Wilson of introducing gods and goddesses, Sir Joshua forgot that he himself was in the practice of baptising the living ladies of England after heathen goddesses, and that he was a dealer in the commonplace flattery of raising ordinary mortals to divine honours. He was aware, when he wrote his criticism, that Wilson had had a hard contest with fortune for existence, and that he died heart-broken by poverty and disappointment; it was therefore unkind and ungenerous to attempt to interrupt the quiet progress of his works to the fame which he could not but know awaited them.

It is related that, at a meeting of the members of the Academy on a social occasion, Reynolds proposed the health of Gainsborough as *the best landscape-painter;* on which Wilson added aloud, *and the best portrait-painter too.* The president pretended not to have been aware of the presence of Wilson, and made a courtly explanation. Wilson, who received the apology with a kind of dissatisfied growl, was afterwards accused by his companions of wanting a proper spirit of conciliation—by which, said they, he might have profited, for the president could endure to be flattered, and was kind to those who submitted to his ascendancy. Reynolds had never experienced any reverse of fortune—the applause of the world was with him, and much of its money in his pocket; he might therefore have afforded to be indulgent to a man of genius suffering under the want of honour, and even the want of bread.

Nor was the President of the Academy the only person who distressed him with injurious opinions. A certain coterie of men, skilful in the mystery of good painting, came to the conclusion that the works of Wilson were deficient in the gayer graces of style, and sent Penny, an

academician, whom Barry worshipped as one of the chief painters on earth, to remonstrate with the artist, and inform him that, if he hoped for fame or their good opinion, he must imitate the lighter style of Zucarelli. Wilson was busied on one of his works when this courier from the Committee of taste announced himself and delivered his message. He heard him in silence—proceeded with his labours—then stopped suddenly, and poured forth a torrent of contemptuous words; which incensed the whole coterie, and induced them to withdraw any little protection which their opinion had extended over him.

As the fortune of Wilson declined his temper became touched—he grew peevish—and in conversation his language assumed a tone of sharpness and acidity which accorded ill with his warm and benevolent heart. Some men are raised to stations where the meanness of their nature shows but the more deformed and repulsive by the contrast; while others, originally of amiable character, soured by neglect, and stung by undeserved insult, forget by degrees dignity in despair, and allow their minds to become as squalid as their dress.

Wilson had, nevertheless, spirit enough at all times to resent impertinence. When Zoffani, in his satiric picture of the Royal Academy, represented him with a pot of porter at his elbow, he instantly selected, like Johnson on an occasion little dissimilar, a proper stout stick, and vowed he would give the caricaturist a satisfactory thrashing. All who knew Wilson made sure he would keep his word; but Zoffani prudently passed his brush over the offensive part, and so escaped the cudgelling. On one occasion Jones, a favourite pupil, invited him to see a large landscape which he had painted;—he looked, and exclaimed, "How, Mr. Jones, what have you been doing? you have stolen my temple!" "Is it too dark, sir?" said Jones. "Oh, black enough of all conscience!" answered the other, and instantly retired.

He was fond of the company of Sir William Beechey,

and at his house he frequently reposed from the cares of the world and the persecution of fortune. He was abstemious at his meals, rarely touching wine or ardent spirits—his favourite beverage was a pot of porter and a toast; and he would accept that when he refused all other things. This was a luxury of which he was determined to have the full enjoyment—he took a moderate draught—sat silent a little while, then drank again, and all the time eyed the quart vessel with a satisfaction which sparkled in his eyes. The first time that Wilson was invited to dine with Beechey, he replied to the request by saying, "You have daughters, Mr. Beechey; do they draw? All young ladies draw now." "No, sir," answered his prudent entertainer, "my daughters are musical." He was pleased to hear this, and accepted the invitation. Such was the blunt honesty of his nature, that when drawings were shown him which he disliked, he disdained, or was unable to give a courtly answer, and made many of the students his enemies. Reynolds had the sagacity to escape from such difficulties by looking at the drawings and saying, "Pretty, pretty," which vanity invariably explained into a compliment.

His process of painting was simple; his colours were few, he used but one brush, and worked standing. He prepared his palette, made a few touches, then retired to the window to refresh his eye with natural light, and returned in a few minutes and resumed his labours. Beechey called on him one day, and found him at work; he seized his visitor hastily by the arm, hurried him to the remotest corner of the room, and said, "There, look at my landscape—this is where you should view a painting, if you wish to examine it with your eyes and not with your nose." He was then an old man, his sight was failing, his touch was unsure, and he painted somewhat coarsely, but the effect was wonderful. He too, like Reynolds, had his secrets of colour and his mystery of the true principles in painting, which he refused to explain, saying, "They are like those of nature, and are to be sought for and found in my performances." Of his own future fame he spoke seldom, for he was a modest man,

but, when he did speak of it, he used expressions which the world has since sanctioned. "Beechey," he said, "you will live to see great prices given for my pictures, when those of Barret will not fetch one farthing."

The salary of librarian rescued him from utter starvation; indeed, so few were his wants, so simple his fare, and so moderate his appetite, that he found it, little as it was, nearly enough. He had, as he grew old, become more neglectful of his person—as fortune forsook him he left a fine house for one inferior; a fashionable street for one cheap and obscure; he made sketches for half-a-crown, and expressed gratitude to Paul Sandby for purchasing a number from him at a small advance of price. His last retreat in this wealthy city was a small room somewhere about Tottenham-Court Road;—an easel and a brush—a chair and a table—a hard bed with few clothes—a scanty meal and the favourite pot of porter—were all that Wilson could call his own. A disgrace to an age which lavished its tens of thousands on mountebanks and projectors—on Italian screamers, and men who made mouths at Shakespeare.

In this wretched retreat he was found out by a lady of rank, who, desirous of obtaining a good landscape, applied to an acquaintance, a student in art, to recommend a first-rate painter. The youth mentioned Wilson, and accompanying the patroness to his apartment, placed some of his best landscapes in proper lights, and with much tact detained the lady at the other end of the room, lest the rough appearance of their finish should alarm her. She was so much pleased, that she commissioned two pictures, fixed the prices, and drove away. Wilson detained his young friend by the arm, looked feelingly in his face, and said, "Your kindness is all in vain—I am wholly destitute—I cannot even purchase proper canvas and colour for these paintings." The young man gave him twenty pounds—for he was related to rich people—then went home and said to himself, "When Wilson, with all his genius, starves, what will become of me?" He laid palette and pencils

aside, pursued his studies at College, and rose high in the Church.

It is reported that Reynolds relaxed his hostility at last —and, becoming generous when it was too late, obtained an order from a nobleman for two landscapes at a proper price. This kindness softened the severity of Wilson's animadversions on the president; but old age with its infirmities was come upon him; his sight was failing, his skill of touch was forsaking him, and his naturally high spirit had begun to yield at last to the repeated injuries of fortune. London was relieved from witnessing the melancholy close of his life. A small estate became his by the death of a brother; and, as if nature had designed to make some amends for the neglect of mankind, a profitable vein of lead was discovered on his ground. When this twofold good fortune befell him, he waited on his steady friend, Sir William Beechey, to ask him if he had any commands for Wales. His spirits were then high, but appeared assumed, for his health was visibly declining, and his faculties were impaired. He put his hands to each side, and pressing them, said, with a sorrowful smile, "Oh! these back settlements of mine!" He took an affecting farewell of Sir William, and set out for his native place, where, far from the bitterness of professional rivalry, and placed above the reach of want, he looked to enjoy a few happy days.

He arrived safely at Colomondie, beside the village of Lanverris, in Denbighshire, and took up his residence with his relation, Mrs. Jones. The house was elegant and commodious, and the situation of that kind which Wilson loved. It stood among fine green hills, with old romantic woods, picturesque rocks, verdant lawns, deep glens, and the whole was cheered with the sound as well as the sight of running water. He was now in affluence—was loved and respected by all around him—and, what was as much to him, or more, he was become a dweller among scenes such as had haunted his imagination, even when Italy spread her beauty before him. He wrought little and walked much;—the stone on which he loved to sit, the

tree under which he shaded himself from the sun, and the stream on the banks of which he commonly walked, are all remembered and pointed out by the peasantry. But he wanted what wealth could not give—youth and strength to enjoy what he had fallen heir to. His strength failed fast—his walks became shorter and less frequent—and the last scene he visited was where two old picturesque fir-trees stood, which he loved to look at and introduce into his compositions. Walking out one day, accompanied by a favourite dog—whether exhausted by fatigue, or overcome by some sudden pain—Wilson sank down, and found himself unable to rise. The sagacious animal ran home, howled, pulled the servants by their clothes, and at last succeeded in bringing them to the aid of his master. He was carried home, but he never fairly recovered from the shock. He complained of weariness and pain, refused nourishment, and languished and expired in May 1782, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

As a landscape-painter the merits of Wilson are great; his conceptions are generally noble, and his execution vigorous and glowing; the dewy freshness, the natural lustre and harmonious arrangement of his scenes, have seldom been exceeded. He rose at once from the tame insipidity of common scenery into natural grandeur and magnificence—his streams seem all abodes for nymphs, his hills are fit haunts for the muses, and his temples worthy of gods. His whole heart was in his art, and he talked and dreamed landscape. He looked on cattle as made only to form groups for his pictures, and on men as they *composed* harmoniously. One day, looking on the fine scene from Richmond Terrace, and wishing to point out a spot of particular beauty to the friend who accompanied him—"There," said he, holding out his finger, "see, near those houses—there, where the *figures* are." He stood for some time by the waterfall of Terni in speechless admiration, and at length exclaimed, "Well done: water, by God!" In aërial effect he considered himself above any rival. When Wright of Derby offered to exchange works with him, he

answered, "With all my heart. I'll give you air, and you will give me fire."

"Wilson," says Fuseli, discoursing on art in 1801, "observed nature in all her appearances, and had a characteristic touch for all her forms. But though, in effects of dewy freshness, and silent evening lights, few have equalled and fewer excelled him, his grandeur is oftener allied to terror, bustle, and convulsion than to calmness and tranquillity. He is now numbered with the classics of the art, though little more than the fifth part of a century has elapsed since death relieved him from the apathy of cognoscenti, the envy of rivals, and the neglect of a tasteless public; for Wilson, whose works will soon command prices as proud as those of Claude, Poussin, or Elzheimer, resembled the last most in his fate, and lived and died nearer to indigence than ease."

Wilson's landscapes are numerous, and are scattered, as they should be, through public galleries and private rooms. They are, in general, productions of fancy rather than of existing reality—scenes pictured forth by the imagination rather than transcribed from nature; yet there is enough of nature in them to please the commonest clown, and enough of what is poetic to charm the most fastidious fancy. He sometimes, indeed, painted fac-similes of scenes, but his heart disliked such unpoetic drudgery; for his thoughts were ever dwelling among hills and streams renowned in story and song, and he loved to expatiate on ruined temples and walk over fields where great deeds had been achieved, and where gods had appeared among men. He was fortunate in little during his life—his "View from Kew Gardens," though exquisite in colour and in simplicity of arrangement, was returned by the King, for whom it was painted; nor was the poetic loveliness of his compositions felt till such acknowledgment was useless to the artist.

The names of a few of his principal compositions will show the historical and poetical influence under which he wrought:—"The Death of Niobe," "Phaëton," "Morning,"

"View of Rome," "Villa of Mecænas at Tivoli," "Celadon and Amelia," "View on the River Po," "Apollo and the Seasons," "Meleager and Atalanta," "Cicero at his Villa," "Lake of Narni," "View on the Coast of Baiæ," "The Tiber near Rome," "Temple of Bacchus," "Adrian's Villa," "Bridge of Rimini," "Rosamond's Pond," "Langallon Bridge," "Castle of Dinas Bran," "Temple of Venus at Baiæ," "Tomb of the Horatii and Curatii," "Broken Bridge of Narni," and "Nymphs Bathing." His pencil sometimes forsook subjects of classic or poetic fame, and dwelt on scenes of natural loveliness; some of these are very captivating compositions—there is a light let in upon the hills, and a verdant freshness among the trees, such as few painters have surpassed. He frequently copied his own pictures, as want of bread or the taste of his customers dictated; this, which all others have done with impunity, has been made matter of reproach; there are men who will not be pleased, and some who deserve not to be pleased, and Wilson experienced the enmity of both.

In person he was above the middling size; his frame was robust, and inclining to be corpulent; his head was large, and his face red and blotchy; he wore a wig with the tail plaited into a club, and a three-cocked hat according to the fashion of his time. In his earlier days, when hope was high, he was a lover of gay company and of gay attire; he sometimes attended the Academy in St. Martin's Lane in a green waistcoat ornamented with gold lace. He loved truth and detested flattery; he could endure a joke but not contradiction. He was deficient in courtesy of speech—in those candied civilities which go for little with men of sense, but which have their effect among the shallow and the vain. His conversation abounded with information and humour, and his manners, which were at first repulsive, gradually smoothed down as he grew animated. Those who enjoyed the pleasure of his friendship agree in pronouncing him a man of strong sense, intelligence, and refinement, and every way worthy of those works which preserve the name of Richard Wilson.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Joshua, the son of the Reverend Samuel Reynolds and Theophila Potter, his wife, was the tenth of eleven children, five of whom died in infancy. He was born at Plympton, in Devonshire, on Thursday, 16th July 1723, three months before the death of Sir Godfrey Kneller, "thus perpetuating," say some of his biographers, "the hereditary descent of art." This descent of talent had a better security for continuation than the life of a new-born child. Wilson was ten years old, and Hogarth had already distinguished himself. The admirers and disciples of Sir Joshua imagined that the mantle of art remained suspended in the air from the day of Kneller's ascent, and refrained from descending upon other shoulders till their favourite rose to manhood and eminence. The pride of Reynolds would have resented, in life, this compliment from his friends—he who shared, in imagination, the imperial robe of Michael Angelo, would have scorned the meaner mantle of Godfrey Kneller.

Few men of genius are allowed to be born or baptised in an ordinary way; some commotion in nature must mark the hour of their birth, some strange interposition must determine their name—the like happened to young Reynolds. His father, a clergyman of the established church, gave him the scriptural name of Joshua, in the belief, says Malone, who had the legend from Bishop Percy, of Dromore, that some enthusiast of the same name might be induced to give him a fortune. The family motives, as recorded by Northcote, had more of the shrewdness of calculation in

them. An uncle, from whom something might be expected, lived in the neighbourhood, and *he* was a Joshua. Owing to the haste or carelessness of the clergyman, the church may claim some share in the marvels which accompanied his birth; he was baptised in one name, and entered in the parish register in another—the Joshua of all the rest of the world is a Joseph at Plympton.

The Reverend Samuel Reynolds, a pious and indolent man, who performed, without reproach, his stated duties in religion, and presided, with the reputation of a scholar, in the public school of Plympton, seems to have neglected, more than such a parent ought, the education of his son. It is true that the boy, inspired (as Johnson intimates in his life of Cowley) with Richardson's "Treatise on Painting," appeared, like Hogarth before him, to be more inclined to make private drawings than public exercises; and it is likewise true that his father rebuked those delinquencies, on one occasion at least, by writing on the back of a prohibited drawing, "Done by Joshua out of pure idleness." But transient rebuke will not cure habitual inattention—the education which we miss in youth we rarely obtain in age, and a good divine and a learned parent could not but know how much learning adorns the highest and brightens the humblest occupation. Northcote, the pupil, and lately the biographer, of Reynolds, reluctantly admits his master's deficiency in classical attainments. But his incessant study of nature, and practice in art, his intercourse with the world at large, and familiarity with men of learning and ability, accomplished in after-life much of what his father had neglected in youth. "The mass of general knowledge by which he was distinguished," says Northcote, "was the result of much studious application in his riper years." "I know no man," observed Johnson to Boswell, "who has passed through life with more observation than Sir Joshua Reynolds."

His father, however, conceived that he had acquired learning sufficient for the practice of physic, for to that profession he was originally destined. He observed to

Northcote that if such had been his career in life, he should have felt the same determination to become the most eminent physician as he then felt to be the first painter of his age and country. He believed, in short, that genius is but another name for extensive capacity, and that incessant and well-directed labour is the inspiration which creates all works of taste and talent.

His inclination to idleness as to reading, and industry in drawing, began to appear early. "His first essay," says Malone, who had the information from himself, "was copying some slight drawings made by two of his sisters, who had a turn for art: he afterwards eagerly copied such prints as he met with among his father's books: particularly those which were given in the translation of 'Plutarch's Lives,' published by Dryden. But his principal fund of imitation was Jacob Catt's 'Book of Emblems,' which his great grandmother by the father's side, a Dutchwoman, had brought with her from Holland." The prints in "Plutarch" are rude and uncouth; those in the "Book of Emblems" are more to the purpose, and probably impressed upon him, by the comparison, that admiration of foreign art which grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength.

When he was some eight years old, he read "The Jesuit's Perspective" with so much care and profit, that he made a drawing of Plympton school, a plain Gothic building, raised partly on pillars, in which the principles of that art were very tolerably adhered to. His father, a simple man, and easily astonished, exclaimed, when he saw this drawing, "This is what the author of the 'Perspective' asserts in his preface, that by observing the rules laid down in this book, a man may do wonders—for this is wonderful." Had the old man lived to see the great works of his son, in what words would he have expressed his admiration?

The approbation of his father, with his own natural love of art, induced him more and more to devote his time to drawing, and neglect his studies at school. He drew like-

nesses of his sisters and of various friends of the family; his proficiency increased with practice; and his ardour kept pace with his growing skill. Richardson's treatise on Painting was now put into his hands, "the perusal of which," says Malone, "so delighted and inflamed his mind, that Raphael appeared to him superior to the most illus trious names of ancient or modern times—a notion which he loved to indulge all the rest of his life."

With no other guides but such prints as he could collect, and little support but his own enthusiasm, Reynolds made many drawings and many portraits, in which his friends, who now began to be attracted by his progress, perceived an increasing accuracy of outline and a growing boldness and freedom. Of those boyish productions no specimen, I believe, is preserved; he himself probably destroyed them, being little pleased with what he had done; but it is inconceivable that a youth like this, who gave so little of his leisure to other knowledge, should have executed nothing worthy of remembrance at the age of nineteen. There is no doubt that, as soon as he had a fair field for the display of his talents, he showed a mind stored with ready images of beauty, and a hand capable of portraying them with truth and effect.

A provincial place like Plympton was too contracted for his expanding powers, and a friend and neighbour, of the name of Cranch, advised that Joshua should be sent to study and improve himself in London. To London he was accordingly sent, on the 14th of October 1741, and on the eighteenth of the same month, the day of Saint Luke, the patron saint of painters, he was placed under the care of Mr. Hudson. Of this propitious circumstance his biographers take particular notice—it keeps the chain of remarkable circumstances unbroken. This favourite of the fates was born three months before the death of Kneller—was named Joshua in a kind of speculation upon Providence—and commenced his studies in London on the day of Saint Luke. Fortune having done her best, young Reynolds had nothing more to do but stand in

the way and be pushed silently on to wealth and reputation.

Hudson, the most distinguished portrait-maker of that time, was nevertheless a man of little skill and less talent; who could paint a head, but without other aid was unable to place it upon the shoulders. He was in truth a mere manufacturer of portraits; and as the taste and practice of Reynolds lay in the same line, there was some propriety in the choice. The timely counsel of his neighbour Cranch would have long afterwards been rewarded with the present of a silver cup—had not an accident interfered. "Death," says Northcote, "prevented this act of gratitude—I have seen the cup at Sir Joshua's table." The painter had the honour of the intention and the use of the cup—a twofold advantage, of which he was not insensible.

At this time Hogarth was in the full employment of his fame. His works were the wonder of every one, and an example to none. His peculiar excellence, indeed, was of such an order that rivalry there was hopeless; and no artist had the sagacity to see that, by adopting a style more sober and less sarcastic, with a greater infusion of beauty, a name as great or greater than his might have been achieved. Students consumed their time in drawing incessantly from other men's works, and vainly thought, by gazing constantly on the unattainable excellence of Raphael and Correggio, to catch a portion of their inspiration. When any one departed from such tame and servile rules, he was pronounced a Gothic dreamer, and unworthy of being numbered among those happy persons patronised by Saint Luke. This accounts for the name of Hogarth being rarely or never found in the lectures or letters of the artists of his own time. Men who are regularly trained to the admiration of a certain class of works admit few into the ranks of painting who have not a kind of academic certificate, and lop carefully away all wild or over-flourishing branches from the tree of regular art. Amongst persons of this stamp, to admire Hogarth amounts to treason against the

great masters. The painters of those days were worshippers of the "grand style"—a term which would seem to mean something alone and unapproachable, for no man offered to make any approaches to it by works that partook of either dignity or imagination.

Reynolds proceeded with his studies under Hudson; but it seldom happens that a man of no genius and moderate skill can give sound counsel to one who longs for distinction, and has the talent to obtain it. Instead of studying from the best models, he caused his pupils to squander time in making careful copies from the drawings of Guercino. These he executed with so much skill, that it was difficult to distinguish them from the originals; and some of them are, at this present moment, shown in the cabinets of the curious as the masterly drawings of Guercino.

While he remained with Hudson he went to a sale of pictures, and just before the auctioneer commenced he observed a great bustle at the door, and heard "Pope! Pope!" whispered round the room. All drew back to make way for the poet to pass, and those who were near enough held out their hands for him to touch as he went along. Reynolds held out his, and had the honour of a gentle shake, of which he was ever after proud. This was one of the early anecdotes of his life which he loved to relate; it shows the enthusiasm of the young painter and the popularity of the great poet.

He continued for two years in the employment of Hudson, and acquired, with uncommon rapidity, such professional knowledge as could then and there be obtained. He painted during that period various portraits, of which he never gave any account, and made many sketches and studies which would require a minute description to be comprehended. It is enough to say, that in general they contained the germ of some of his future graces, and displayed considerable freedom of handling and truth of delineation. Among the productions most worthy of remembrance was the portrait of an elderly servant-

woman of Hudson's, in which, says Northcote, he discovered a taste so superior to the painters of the day, that his master, not without displaying a strong feeling of jealousy, foretold his future eminence. It was accidently exhibited in Hudson's gallery, and obtained general applause. This was more than the old man could endure. Without any warm or angry words, a separation took place, and Reynolds returned into Devonshire.

Had his talents been known, and had his works at that period been publicly exhibited, Reynolds would have remained in London; for patronage is ever ready to encourage skill such as his, exerted in such a department. He returned home, however, in 1743, and passed three years in company, from which, as he informed Malone, little improvement could be got. Of this misemployment of his time he always spoke with concern. He had, however, the good sense to consider his disagreement with Hudson as a blessing; otherwise, he confessed, it might have been very difficult for him to escape from the tameness and insipidity, from the fair-tied wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which his master bestowed liberally on all customers. Of the use of the three years in question, Reynolds was certainly a competent judge; yet weight must be allowed to the opinion of Northcote, who says, that during this period he produced many portraits, particularly one of a boy reading by a reflected light, which were undoubtedly very fine. And in truth Sir Joshua himself seems to have acknowledged this, when, on seeing some of these pieces at the distance of thirty years, he lamented that in so great a length of time he had made so little progress in his art.

It was indeed impossible for a mind so active and a hand so ready to continue idle: and there can be no doubt that Reynolds was silently improving himself, even though he was not satisfied with the progress. There were few paintings of excellence indeed near him, but it is not on admirable paintings alone that a painter should look; there was beauty and manliness enough in Devonshire for the

purposes of his profession, and when he was weary of that, there were the images which he had stored away in his memory, and which his fancy could recall whenever it was desirable. It is more satisfactory to some of his professional friends to think that he studied with profit the works of William Gandy of Exeter, a painter, some of whose portraits Reynolds certainly spoke of as equal to those of Rembrandt. One of Gandy's works he particularly admired, the portrait of an Alderman of Exeter, placed in one of the public buildings of that place; and one of his observations he took much pleasure in repeating—namely, that a picture should have a richness in its texture, as if the colours had been composed of cream or cheese.

When he was two-and-twenty years old, Reynolds and his two youngest unmarried sisters took a house at the town of Plymouth Dock: here he occupied the first floor, and employed his time in painting portraits. It must be confessed that many of his productions, up to this period, were carelessly drawn—in common attitudes, and undistinguished by those excellences of colouring and power of expression which have made his name famous. His old master, Hudson, was still strong within him. One hand was hid in the unbuttoned waistcoat, the other held the hat; and the face was looking forward with that vacant listlessness which is the mark of a sitter who conceives portrait-painting to resemble shaving, and that the *sine quâ non* is to keep his features stiff and composed. One gentlemen desired to be distinguished from others, and was painted with his hat on his head; yet so inveterate had the practice of painting in one position become, that—if there be any truth in a story as yet uncontradicted—when the likeness was sent home, the wife of the patient discovered that her husband had not only one hat on his head, but another under his arm. It is, however, well known that, even when his reputation was high, Reynolds permitted ladies, and gentlemen too, to select for themselves the positions they wished to be painted in; and his Devonshire patrons of this early period might, in all likelihood,

consider it as desirable to appear, as much as possible, like their fathers and their friends. When left to the freedom of his own will, some of his attitudes, even in these days, were bold enough. A portrait of himself, which represents him with pencils and palette in his left hand, and shading the light from his eyes with his right, was painted at this time, and is, without doubt, a work of great merit.

Miss Chudleigh, a young lady of rare beauty, afterwards too famous as Duchess of Kingston, happened to be on a visit at Saltram, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, and sat for her portrait. This seems to have pleased Reynolds less than another sitter, whom he obtained at the same time, for he could not forsee that she would become a duchess. This was the commissioner of Plymouth Dock: he wrote to his father, with a joy which he sought not to conceal, that he had painted the likeness of the greatest man in the place. The performance which obtained him most notice was the portrait of Captain Hamilton, of the noble family of Abercorn. It was painted in 1746.

On Christmas day, in the year 1746, his father died. He was a man of respectable learning, and remarkable for the innocence of his heart and the simplicity of his manners. He was what is called an absent man, and was regarded by his parishioners as a sort of Parson Adams. Of his forgetfulness it is said that, in performing a journey on horseback, one of his boots dropped off by the way, without being missed by the owner; and of his wit—for wit also has been ascribed to him!—it is related that, in allusion to his wife's name, *Theophila*, he made the following rhyming domestic arrangement:

"When I say The
Thou must make tea—
When I say Offey
Thou must make coffee."

Reynolds was now twenty-three years old, and his name was beginning to be heard beyond the limits of his native county. He had acquired the friendship and patronage of the third Lord Edgcumbe, and of Captain, afterwards Lord

Keppel. He had paid a second visit to London, and lived for a time in Saint Martin's Lane, then the favourite residence of artists, and where something which resembled an academy was established. His growing fame and skill acquired and secured friends, and his graceful and unpresuming manners were likely to forward his success; he was polite without meanness, and independent without arrogance.

Rome, which is in reality to painters what Parnassus is in imagination to poets, was frequently present to the fancy of Reynolds: and he longed to see with his own eyes the glories in art, of which he heard so much. In May 1749 Captain Keppel was appointed Commodore in the Mediterranean station, for the purpose of protecting the British merchants from the insults of the Algerines, and he invited Reynolds to accompany him. The young artist willingly embarked with the full equipment of his profession, and, touching at Lisbon, went ashore and witnessed several religious processions. He next visited Gibraltar; and on the 20th of July landed at Algiers, where he was introduced to the Dey, who behaved with civility, and dismissed Keppel and his companion with assurances of amity and good-will, which he afterwards seemed disinclined to keep. From Algiers they sailed for Minorca, and landed at Port Mahon on the 23rd of August. The friendship of Keppel, and the kindness of General Blakeney, were here very serviceable: through their influence, and his own skill, Reynolds was employed to paint portraits of almost all the officers in the garrison; and as he lived free of all expense at the governor's table, he improved his fortune at the same time that he exercised his talents.

Reynolds was detained in Minorca longer than he wished. As he was taking an airing on horseback, his horse took fright, and rushed with him down a precipice, by which his face was severely cut, and his lip so much bruised that he was compelled to have some of it cut away. A slight deformity marked his mouth ever after. His deafness was imputed by some to the same misfortune;

but that misfortune dated from a dangerous illness in Rome. After a residence of three months, he left Port Mahon, landed at Leghorn, and went directly to Rome.

Of his first sensations in the Metropolis of Art he has left us a minute account. "It has frequently happened (says he)—as I was informed by the keeper of the Vatican —that many of those whom he had conducted through the various apartments of that edifice, when about to be dismissed, have asked for the works of Raphael, and would not believe that they had already passed through the rooms where they are preserved: so little impression had those performances made on them. One of the first painters in France once told me that this circumstance happened to himself: though he now looks on Raphael with that veneration which he deserves from all painters and lovers of the art. I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raphael had the same effect on him, or rather, they did not produce the effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind; and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who, from natural imbecility, appeared to be incapable of relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them. In justice to myself, however, I must add, that though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raphael, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them, as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that have ever happened to me; I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted; I felt my ignorance and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the

art was in the lowest state it had ever been in (it could not, indeed, be lower), were to be totally done away and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become *as a little child.* Nothwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit, and admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and a new perception began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the admiration of the world. The truth is, that if these works had really been what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to the great reputation which they have borne so long, and so justly obtained."

That Reynolds had imagined the Vatican filled with works of another order from what he found there, is only informing us that in his earlier years he thought differently from Raphael. He had been accustomed to admire stiff or extravagant attitudes, and to put faith in works deficient in the sober dignity and majestic simplicity which distinguished the illustrious Italian. He saw those noble productions; and though at first he could not feel their excellence, he, before he left Rome, became one of their daily worshippers. All this was very natural: but the conclusion which Reynolds draws—viz., that none but an imbecile person can be alive at first sight to the genius of a Raphael—is certainly rash, and, most probably, erroneous.

"Having" (he says) "since that period frequently revolved the subject in my mind, I am now clearly of opinion, that a relish for the higher excellences of art is an acquired taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation and great labour and attention. On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness; as if it were to be expected that our minds, like tinder, should catch fire

from the divine spark of Raphael's genius. I flatter myself that now it would be so, and that I have a just and lively perception of his great powers; but let it always be remembered, that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep; and at the first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style which strikes at once, and captivates the eye for a time, without ever satisfying the judgment. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts. A just poetical taste, and the acquisition of a nice discriminative musical ear, are equally the work of time. Even the eye, however perfect in itself, is often unable to distinguish between the brilliancy of two diamonds; though the experienced jeweller will be amazed at its blindness; not considering that there was a time when he himself could not have been able to pronounce which of the two was the more perfect."

I must repeat that I doubt as to all this. True art is nature exalted and refined; but it is nature still. We look on a noble scene—on a high mountain—on a mighty sea—on a troubled sky—or on any of the splendid pictures which the Lord of the Universe spreads before His creatures, and we require no long course of study, no series of academic lectures on light and shade, to enable us to feel their grandeur or their beauty. If the study of many years, and great labour and attention, be absolutely necessary to enable men to comprehend and relish the nobler productions of the poet and the painter—then who has not judged by guess and admired by random some of the most glorious works of the human mind? That it cost Reynolds much time and study to understand and admire them is nothing: he had to banish preconceived false notions, to dismiss idolised and merely conventional beauties, and strip himself of laboured absurdities, with which he had been bedecking himself from his infancy. He had to rise out of false art into true nature—and this was not to be done in a day. But is it necessary that all men should start with a false theory? The acquisition of a natural taste in poetry, or a correct musical apprehension, may be the work

of time with some, but they are as certainly a kind of inspiration in others. Reynolds himself seems to have thought with more accuracy when he wrote as follows :—

"The man of true genius," (says he) "instead of spending all his hours, as many artists do while they are at Rome, in measuring statues, and copying pictures, soon begins to think for himself, and endeavours to do something like what he sees. I consider general copying a delusive kind of industry: the student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object; as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work, and those powers of invention and disposition, which ought particularly to be called out and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise. How incapable of producing anything of their own those are who have spent most of their time in making finished copies, is an observation well known to all who are conversant with our art."

To Reynolds's own written account I may add the testimony of a friend, who often conversed with him upon the glories of Rome: "When arrived in that garden of the world," says Northcote, "that great temple of the arts, his time was diligently and judiciously employed in such a manner as might have been expected from one of his talents and virtue. He contemplated with unwearied attention and ardent zeal the various beauties which marked the style of different schools and different ages. It was with no common eye that he beheld the productions of the great masters. He copied and sketched in the Vatican such parts of the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo as he thought would be most conducive to his future excellence, and by his well-directed study acquired, whilst he contemplated the best works of the best masters, that grace of thinking, to which he was principally indebted for his subsequent reputation as a portrait-painter."

Much, however, as Reynolds in his lectures inculcates

the necessity of constantly copying the great masters—it appears that he did but little in this way himself. "Of the few copies which he made while at Rome," says Malone, "two are now in the possession of the Earl of Inchiquin, who married his niece, Miss Palmer, 'St. Michael the Archangel Slaying the Dragon,' after Guido, and 'The School of Athens,' from Raphael—both masterly performances." Rome at that period swarmed with those English connoisseurs and travellers of taste whom Hogarth so sharply satirised and hated so cordially; they were all anxious to have copies of favourite works made by an artist so able as Reynolds; he felt, however, the folly of multiplying pictures, and eluded their alluring offers. "Whilst I was at Rome," he says, "I was very little employed by travellers, and that little I always considered as so much time lost."

Of the character and course of his technical studies in Rome he has left a minute account; which, however, is chiefly valuable to the student in painting—for the language is that of the craft. Having filled his mind with the character of the great painters, and possessed himself, as he believed, with no small portion of their spirit, he proceeded to examine into the mechanical sorcery of their execution, and to dissect the varied colours which were blended on their canvas:—"The Leda in the Colonna Palace by Correggio," he says, "is dead-coloured white, and black or ultramarine in the shadows; and over that is scumbled thinly and smooth a warmer tint—I believe caput mortuum. The lights are mellow, the shadows bluish, but mellow. The picture is painted on a panel, in a broad, large manner, but finished like an enamel; the shadows harmonise, and are lost in the ground.

"'The Adonis' of Titian in the Colonna Palace is dead-coloured white, with the muscles marked bold; the second painting has scumbled a light colour over it; the lights a mellow flesh-colour; the shadows in the light parts of a faint purple hue; at least they were so at first. That purple hue seems to be occasioned by blackish shadows

under, and the colour scumbled over them. I copied the Titian with white, umber, minio, cinnabar, black; the shadows thin of colour.

"Poussin's landscapes in the Verospi Palace are painted on a dark ground made of Indian red and black. The same ground might do for all other subjects as well as landscapes.

"In respect to painting the flesh tint, after it has been finished with very strong colours, such as ultramarine and carmine, pass white over it very very thin with oil. I believe it will have a wonderful effect. Make a finished sketch of every portrait you intend to paint, and by the help of that dispose your living model; then finish at the first time on a ground made of Indian red and black."

Through all his letters and memorandums there are scattered allusions to his favourite art, and the works of the chief masters; and opinions are given, and a scale of comparative excellence laid down, in a manner equally clear, candid, and accurate. It is true that he dictates rules for the guidance of others which he did not follow himself. When he became acquainted with all the wiles and stratagems of position and light and shade, he could dispense with the practice of making sketches of portraits, and depend on his experience.

"In comparison with Titian and Paul Veronese," he observes, "all the other Venetian masters appear hard; they have in a degree the manner of Rembrandt—all mezzotinto, occasioned by scumbling over their pictures with some dark oil or colour. There is little colour in the shadows, but much oil—they seem to be made only of a drying oil composed of red lead and oil. There are some artists who are diligent in examining pictures, and yet are not at all advanced in their judgment; although they can remember the exact colour of every figure in the picture; but not reflecting deeply on what they have seen, or making observations to themselves, they are not at all improved by the crowd of particulars that swim on the surface of their brains; as nothing enters deep enough into their minds

to do them benefit through digestion. A painter should form his rules from pictures rather than from books or precepts. Rules were first made from pictures, not pictures from rules. Every picture an artist sees, whether the most excellent or the most ordinary, he should consider from whence that fine effect or that ill effect proceeds; and then there is no picture ever so indifferent but he may look at to his profit."

On our English connoisseurs and travellers of taste he has written some sharp and just remarks. This country, at that period, and long after, exported swarms of men with the malady of vertù upon them, who brought back long lists of pictures, and catalogues of artists' names—and set up for dictators here at home with no other stock. "The manner," says Reynolds, "of the English travellers in general, and of those who most pique themselves on studying vertù, is that, instead of examining the beauties of these works of fame, and why they are esteemed, they only inquire the subject of the picture, and the name of the painter, the history of a statue, and where it is found, and write that down. Some Englishmen, while I was in the Vatican, came there, and spent about six hours in writing down whatever the antiquary dictated to them. They scarcely ever looked at the paintings the whole time."

Reynolds extended his inquiries amongst the remains of ancient art, and endeavoured to ascertain, by what he could glean from the classic writers, and by what he could discover in the remaining statues, how far the paintings of ancient Greece resembled those of modern Rome. His conclusions can only be considered as expressions of belief, on a subject with regard to which we have not the materials of certain knowledge. He stayed in Rome till his judgment ripened, and gazed on the productions of Raphael and Michael Angelo till the mercury of his taste rose to the point of admiration. He then concluded, that, as those works were the most perfect in the world, the paintings of antiquity *must* have been in character the same—in short, that the "grand style" had descended direct from

Apelles to Raphael. From an anecdote in Pliny, of the painter and the partridge, he conceived that a lively copy of nature was held as a vulgar thing by the painters of Greece, and that they approached living life no nearer than the sculptor of the Belvedere Apollo. This theory, however, appears to be contradicted by the Elgin marbles, and by the poetry of the nation, which is full of graphic images of homely as well as heroic life. These conclusions, and his constant admonition to study the "grand style," and think of nothing but what is heroic and godlike as a subject for the pencil, have helped to misdirect the minds of students, and beget a monotony of composition, through which nothing but strong and decided genius can break. Few men are born with powers equal to the divine grandeur of such works—and many a good painter of domestic life may attribute the laborious dulness of his historic compositions to the incessant cry of all academies about the study of the "grand style." Hear how Reynolds commends the absence of nature—

"Suppose a person, while he is contemplating a capital picture by Raphael or the Carracci, whilst he is wrapped in wonder at the sight of 'St. Paul preaching at Athens,' and the various dispositions of his audience—or is struck with the distress of the mother in the 'Death of the Innocents' —or with tears in his eyes beholds the 'Dead Christ' of Carracci—would it not offend him to have his attention called off to observe a piece of drapery in the picture naturally represented?"

What is it that drapery ought to resemble—and wherewithal shall a man be clothed that his garments may not look too natural? The living St. Paul himself was under no such apprehension; nor is it recorded that he failed in any of his missions because the heathen paid more attention to his clothes than his eloquence. The sentiment and character of the figure will dictate the drapery, and when these are strong, and true, and natural, they will always predominate over the accessories. Had he advised to clothe a figure gaily or gravely, according to the style of the

countenance and gesture, Reynolds would have spoken more in keeping with his own practice.

He seems to have employed his time at Rome chiefly in studying all the varieties of excellence, and in acquiring that knowledge of effect which he was so soon to display. The severe dignity of Angelo or Raphael he had no chance of attaining, for he wanted loftiness of imagination, without which no grand work can ever be achieved; but he had a deep sense of character, great skill in light and shade, a graceful softness and an alluring sweetness, such as none have surpassed. From the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Fra. Bartolomeo, Titian, and Velasquez, he acquired knowledge, which placed fortune and fame within his reach;—yet of these artists he says little, though he acknowledges the portrait of "Innocent the Tenth," by the last-named of them, to be the finest in the world.

Few original productions came from the hand of Reynolds while he remained at Rome. He painted a noble portrait of himself, and left it in that city: and he also painted a kind of parody on "Raphael's School of Athens," into which he introduced about thirty likenesses of English students, travellers and connoisseurs, and amongst others that of Mr. Henry, of Straffan, in Ireland, the proprietor of the picture. "I have heard Reynolds himself say," remarks Northcote, "that it was universally allowed that he executed subjects of this kind with much humour and spirit; yet he thought it prudent to abandon the practice, since it might corrupt his taste as a portrait-painter, whose duty it was to discover only the perfections of those whom he represented."

During the period of his studies at Rome, Reynolds was the companion of John Astley, who had been his fellow-pupil in the school of Hudson. This was an indifferent artist and an imperfect scholar—for he would rather run three miles to deliver a message by word of mouth than write the shortest note; but his person attracted the notice of a lady of noble birth, who moreover brought him a very handsome fortune. Before his marriage, he was poor and

nearly destitute; yet he had a proud heart, and strove to conceal his embarrassments. One summer day, when the day was hot, and he, Reynolds, and a few others, were indulging themselves in a country excursion, there was a general call to cast off coats;—Astley obeyed with manifest reluctance, and not until he had stood many sarcasms from his friends. He had made the back of his waistcoat out of one of his own landscapes, and when he stripped, he displayed a foaming waterfall, much to his own confusion and the mirth of his companions.

From Rome Reynolds went to Bologna and Genoa. He was not one of those artists who see—or think they see—through all the deep mysteries of conception and execution at a glance; he perused and reperused, and considered and compared, with the assiduity and anxiety of a man ambitious to be counted with the foremost, and resolved not to fail for want of labour. He was more frugal of his remarks while at these cities than when he was at Rome; nor are the few which he did set down of any value, either to students or travellers. From Genoa he proceeded to Parma, and this is his memorandum respecting the painting in the cupola of the cathedral:—

"Relieve the light part of the picture with a dark ground, or the dark part with a light ground, whichever will have the most agreeable effect, or make the best mass. The cupola of Parma has the dark objects relieved, and the lights scarcely distinguishable from the ground. Some whole figures are considered as shadows; all the lights are of one colour. It is in the shadows only that the colours vary. In general, all the shadows should be of one colour, and the lights only to be distinguished by different tints; at least it should be so when the background is dark in the picture."

From Parma Reynolds travelled to Florence, where he remained two months, observing much, but committing few remarks to writing;—and from thence to Venice, where his stay was still shorter. This is the more remarkable, since the Venetian school influenced his professional

character far more powerfully than all the other schools of art put together: and his silence concerning the excellences of the famous masters of Venice, and his short abode there, have occasioned some curious speculations. It has been observed that Reynolds admired one style and painted another; that with Raphael and Michael Angelo, and "the great masters" and "the grand style" on his lips, he dedicated his own pencil to works of a character into which little of the lofty, and nothing of the divine, could well be introduced. To have explained by what means or by what studies he acquired his own unrivalled skill in art would have been more to the purpose than comments upon Correggio, or Raphael, or Michael Angelo. He has chosen to remain silent, and artists must seek for the knowledge which made the fortune of Reynolds elsewhere than in his counsel.

"After an absence," says Malone, "of near three years, he began to think of returning home; and a slight circumstance, which he used to mention, may serve to show that, however great may have been the delight which he derived from residence in a country that Raphael and Michael Angelo had embellished by their works, the prospect of revisiting his native land was not unpleasing. When he was at Venice, in compliment to the English gentlemen then residing there, the manager of the opera one night ordered the band to play an English ballad tune. Happening to be the popular air which was played or sung in almost every street just at the time of their leaving London, by suggesting to them that metropolis, with all its endearing circumstances, it immediately brought tears into Reynolds's eyes, as well as into those of his countrymen who were present." "Thus nature will prevail," adds Northcote, "and Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and even Titian, were all given up at the moment, from the delightful prospect of again returning to his native land." On his way over Mount Cenis he met Hudson and Roubiliac hasting on to Rome. At Paris he found Chambers, the architect, who afterwards aided him in founding the Royal

Academy. Here he painted the portrait of Mrs. Chambers, daughter of Wilton, the sculptor, who was eminently beautiful. She is represented in a hat, which shades part of her face. The picture was much admired, and must have raised high expectations.

He arrived in England in October 1752, and after visiting Devonshire for a few weeks, obeyed the solicitations of Lord Edgcumbe and his own wishes, and established himself as a professional man in Saint Martin's Lane, London. He found such opposition as genius is commonly doomed to meet with, and does not always overcome. The boldness of his attempts, the freedom of his conceptions, and the brilliancy of his colouring, were considered as innovations upon the established and orthodox system of portrait manufacture. The artists raised their voices first; and of these Hudson, who had just returned from Rome, was loudest. His old master looked for some minutes on a boy, in a turban, which he had just painted, and exclaimed, with the addition of the national oath—"Reynolds, you don't paint so well as when you left England!" Ellis, an eminent portrait-maker, who had studied under Kneller, lifted up his voice the next—"Ah! Reynolds, this will never answer. Why, you don't paint in the least like Sir Godfrey." The youthful artist defended himself with much ability, upon which the other exclaimed in astonishment at this new heresy in art—"Shakespeare in poetry—and Kneller in painting, damme!"—and walked out of the room. This sharp treatment and the constant quotation of the names of Lely and Kneller, infected the mind of Reynolds with a dislike for the works of these two popular painters, which continued to the close of his life.

He thus describes the artists with whom he had to contend in the commencement of his career. "They have got a set of postures, which they apply to all persons indiscriminately; the consequence of which is, that all their pictures look like so many sign-post paintings; and if they have a history or a family-piece to paint, the first thing they do is to look over their commonplace-book, containing

sketches which they have stolen from various pictures; then they search their prints over, and pilfer one figure from one print and another from a second; but never take the trouble of thinking for themselves." From the reproach of dealing in long-established attitudes, Reynolds himself is by no means free; but he never copied a posture which he failed to make his own, by throwing over it the charm of a graceful fancy and the elegance of nature.

The contest with his fellow artists was of a short continuance. The works which had gained him celebrity were not the fortunate offspring of some happy moment, but of one who could pour out such pictures in profusion. Better ones were not slow in coming. He painted the second Duke of Devonshire, and this increased his fame. He next painted his patron, Commodore Keppel—and produced a work of such truth and nobleness that it fixed universal attention. This gallant seaman, in pursuing a privateer, ran his ship aground on the coast of France, and was made prisoner in the midst of his exertions to save his crew from destruction. He was released from prison, and acquitted of all blame by a court-martial. The portrait represents him just escaped from shipwreck. The artist deviated from the formal style of his rivals, and deviated into excellence. The spirit of a higher species of art is visible in this performance, yet the likeness was reckoned perfect.

But so unsettled is fashion, so fluctuating is taste, so uncertain is a man of genius of obtaining the reward he deserves—so little can he depend upon the immediate triumph of intellect over pretension—that the popularity of any contemptible competitor annoys and disturbs him. So it happened to Reynolds. One Liotard, a native of Geneva, of little skill and of no genius, but patronised by several noblemen, rose suddenly into distinction and employment. Of this Reynolds spoke and wrote with much impatience and some bitterness. "The only merit in Liotard's pictures" (he says) "is neatness, which, as a general rule, is the characteristic of low genius, or rather no genius at all.

His pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for their amusement; nor is there any person, how poor soever their talents may be, but in a very few years, by dint of practice, may possess themselves of every qualification in the art which this *great man* has got." This is sufficiently severe —it is, however, just. The portraits of his rival were facsimiles of life—they had no vigour, no elegance, no intellect—they were minute without grace, and laboured without beauty. The friends of Liotard, finding that no honour was reflected back upon them by their patronage, withdrew their protection; his name sunk into silence, and he returned to the Continent, leaving an open field and the honour of the victory to Reynolds—the first time that a British painter had triumphed in such a contest. He now removed from St. Martin's Lane, the Grub Street of artists, and took a handsome house on the north side of Great Newport Street. His portrait of Keppel and his picture of the two Grevilles, brother and sister, as Cupid and Psyche —and his success in the contest for distinction with Liotard —brought business in abundance, and his apartments were filled with ladies of quality and with men of rank, all alike desirous to have their person preserved to posterity by one who touched no subject without adorning it. "The desire to perpetuate the form of self-complacency," says Northcote, "crowded the sitting-room of Reynolds with women who wished to be transmitted as angels, and with men who wished to appear as heroes and philosophers. From his pencil they were sure to be gratified. The force and felicity of his portraits not only drew around him the opulence and beauty of the nation, but happily gained him the merited honour of perpetuating the features of all the eminent and distinguished men of learning then living." It is not a little amusing to read Reynolds's lofty commendations of Raphael and Angelo—to observe how warmly he poured out his admiration over the severe dignity of their productions, and how enthusiastically he laboured to establish the serene majesty of the "grand style" in opposition to all other works; and then to look at him in his own person

commencing the regular manufacture of faces as soon as he has leisure to establish himself. I sincerely believe, however, that in devoting his pencil to portraits he not only took the way to fortune, but followed the scope of his nature. He was deficient in the lofty apprehension of a subject; had little power in picturing out vividly scenes from history or from poetry; and, through this capital deficiency of imagination, was compelled to place in reality before him what others could bring by the force of fancy.

He was now thirty years old, his fame was spread far and wide, and the number of his commissions augmented daily. In the force and grace of expression, and in the natural splendour of colouring, no one could rival him; success begot confidence in his own powers; he tried bolder attitudes and more diversified character, and succeeded in every attempt. A close observer of nature, he laid hold of every happy attitude into which either negligence or study threw the human frame. On one occasion, he observed that a noble person, one of his sitters, instead of looking the way the painter wished, kept gazing at a beautiful picture by one of the old masters. The artist instantly pressed this circumstance into service. "I snatched the moment," he observes, "and drew him in profile with as much of that expression of a pleasing melancholy as my capacity enabled me to hit off. When the picture was finished, he liked it, and particularly for that expression, though, I believe, without reflecting on the occasion of it."

Some time in the year 1754 he acquired the acquaintance, and afterwards the friendship, of Samuel Johnson. How this happened is related by Boswell. The artist was visiting in Devonshire, and in an interval of conversation or study opened the "Life of Savage." While he was standing with his arm leaning against the chimney-piece, he began to read, and it seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move he found his arm totally benumbed. He was solicitous to know an author, one of whose books had thus enchanted him, and by

accident or design he met him at the Miss Cotterals in Newport Street. It was Reynolds's good fortune also to make a remark, which Johnson perceived could only have arisen in the mind of a man who thought for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations: "You have, however, the comfort," said Reynolds, "of being relieved from the burden of gratitude." They were shocked at this selfish suggestion; but Johnson maintained that it was true to human nature, and, on going away, accompanied Reynolds home. Thus commenced a friendship which was continued to old age without much interruption.

The rough and saturnine Johnson was very unlike the soft, the graceful, and flexible Reynolds. The former, the most distinguished man of his time for wit, wisdom, various knowledge, and original vigour of genius, had lived neglected—nay, spurned by the opulent and the titled—till his universal fame forced him on them; and when, after life was half spent in toil and sorrow, he came forth at length from his obscurity, he spread consternation among the polished circles by his uncouth shape and gestures, more by his ready and vigorous wit, and an incomparable sharpness of sarcasm, made doubly keen and piercing by learning. His circumstances rendered it unnecessary to soothe the proud by assentation, or the beautiful by fine speeches. He appeared among men not to win his way leisurely to the first place by smiles and bows; but to claim it, take it, and keep it, as the distinction to which he was born, and of which he had been too long defrauded. The course which his art required Reynolds to pursue was far different from this. The temper of Hogarth had injured his practice in portraiture; the lesson had been recently read, and the prudent and sagacious Reynolds resolved not to drive fortune from his door by austerity of manners and surly and intractable independence of spirit. He who would succeed as a portrait-painter must practice the patience and the courtesy of a fine lady's physician. It is not enough to put the sitter into a suitable posture: he

must also by conversation move him into a suitable mood of mind, and that natural and unembarrassed ease of expression without which there can be no success. He has, moreover, to keep him thus, throughout the whole of a tedious operation. No one will suppose that the difficulties are less with patients of the softer sex. To the vain and the whimsical Reynolds opposed constant courtesy, and soothed them by that professional flattery to which they are generally accessible. Disappointment and unmerited neglect had for ever roughened Johnson; his *trade* polished Reynolds. The flattery which the latter practised with his pencil helped to smooth his tongue; and I am surprised that Northcote, a man shrewd and observing, should have been unconscious of this, when he accuses the former of pride, envy, and vulgarity, and compares the discourtesy of his inquiring in the presence of the Duchess of Argyle, "How much, Reynolds, do you think we could win in a week, if we were to work as hard as we could?" with the graceful and accommodating manners of his old master. Reynolds, however—whether from that kind of feeling which induces one man to admire another for what he wants himself, or from a desire of profiting by the wisdom and the wit, the conversational eloquence and opulent understanding, of Johnson—cultivated the friendship of the great author assiduously and successfully:—and of the fruit which he derived from the intercourse he thus speaks in one of his "Discourses on Art":—

"Whatever merit these 'Discourses' may have must be imputed in a great measure to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would be to the credit of these 'Discourses' if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the art of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking. Perhaps other men might have equal knowledge, but few were so communicative. His great pleasure was to talk to those who looked up to him. It was here he exhibited his wonderful powers.

The observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on everything about us, I applied to our art—with what success others must judge."

The price which Reynolds at first received for a *head* was five guineas; the rate increased with his fame, and in the year 1755 his charge was twelve. Experience about this time dictated the following memorandum respecting his art. "For painting the flesh:—black, blue-black, white, lake, carmine, orpiment, yellow-ochre, ultramarine, and varnish. To lay the palette: first lay, carmine and white in different degrees; second lay, orpiment and white ditto; third lay, blue-black and white ditto. The first sitting, for expedition, make a mixture as like the sitter's complexion as you can." Some years afterwards I find, by a casual notice from Johnson, that Reynolds had raised his price for a head to twenty guineas.

The year 1758 was perhaps the most lucrative of his professional career. The account of the economy of his studies, and the distribution of his time at this period, is curious and instructive. It was his practice to keep all the prints engraved from his portraits, together with his sketches, in a large portfolio; these he submitted to his sitters; and, whatever position they selected, he immediately proceeded to copy it on the canvas, and paint the likeness to correspond. He received six sitters daily, who appeared in their turns; and he kept regular lists of those who sat, and of those who were waiting until a finished portrait should open a vacancy for their admission. He painted them as they stood on his list, and often sent the work home before the colours were dry. Of lounging visitors he had a great abhorrence, and, as he reckoned up the fruits of his labours, "those idle people," said this disciple of the grand historical school of Raphael and Angelo, "those idle people do not consider that my time is worth five guineas an hour." This calculation incidentally informs us that it was Reynolds's practice, in the height of his reputation and success, to paint a portrait in four hours.

His acquaintance with Johnson induced him, about this time, to write for the "Idler" some papers on exact imitations of nature and the true conception of beauty. These essays are not remarkable either for vigour or for elegance; they set nothing old in a new light. He claims for painting the privilege of poetry—in selecting fit subjects for the pencil, in imitating what is pure and lofty, and avoiding the mechanical drudgery of copying with a servile accuracy all that nature presents. He asserts that poetry is the sister of painting; that both exercise authority over the realms of imagination; and that the latter alone adds intellectual energy to the productions of fancy. Concerning our conceptions of the beautiful, he says that the productions of nature are all of themselves beautiful; and that custom, rather than the surpassing loveliness of particular objects, directs our admiration. He expended much thought in the composition of these papers; and as they were required by Johnson to meet some sudden emergency, he sat up all night, which occasioned a sharp illness that detained him awhile from his pencil. In these essays he urges his favourite theory of contemplating and practising the more grave and serenely poetical style of painting, and his love of the religious productions of the great apostles of Romish art is visible in every page. His remarks are deficient in that original spirit which distinguishes the ruder memorandums of Hogarth; and, what is odd enough, he seems to comprehend less clearly than the other the scope and character of the works of the great foreign masters, though he had lived long in daily contemplation of their productions.

Notwithstanding his professional diligence, and the time which he was compelled to yield to the attachment of friends and the curiosity of strangers, he found leisure to note down many useful remarks concerning his art; some of which seem coloured by the imagination or moulded by the sagacity of Johnson. "The world," he says, "was weary of the long train of insipid imitators of Claude and Poussin, and demanded something new; Salvator Rosa saw

and supplied this deficiency. He struck into a new and savage sort of composition, which was very striking. Sannazarius, the Italian poet, for the same reason substituted fishermen for shepherds, and changed the scene to the sea. Want of simplicity is a material imperfection either in conception or in colouring. There is a pure, chaste, modest, as well as a bold, independent, glaring colour; men of genius use the one, common minds the other. Some painters think they never can enrich their pictures enough, and delight in gaudy colours and startling contrasts. All hurry and confusion in the composition of the picture should be avoided; it deprives the work of the majesty of repose. When I think on the high principle of the art, it brings to my mind the works of L. Carracci, and the 'Transfiguration' of Raphael. There every figure is ardent and animated, yet all is dignified. A solemnity pervades the whole picture, which strikes every one with awe and reverence." No artist ever had a finer sense of excellence—could distinguish more accurately between various degrees of merit in all the great productions of the pencil, or lay down happier rules for composition. He probably never lived a day without thinking of Michael Angelo, Raphael, or Correggio; he certainly never wrote a professional memorandum without introducing their works or their names: a circumstance which blunts the sting of those lines in *Retaliation*—

> "When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
> He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff."

The influence of an artist of commanding skill now began to be manifest: those who admired the moral scenes of the shrewd and sarcastic Hogarth were no less delighted with the works of one who had all the grace and beauty which long acquaintance with foreign pictures had taught them to admire. It was pleasing to national pride to see an Englishman measure himself successfully with Lely or Vandyke; and personal vanity was hourly pampered by his hand. Commissions continued to pour in—the artist

engaged several subordinate labourers, who were skilful in draperies—raised his price in 1760 to twenty-five guineas, and began to lay the foundation of a fortune.

It has been said that Hogarth observed the rising fame of Reynolds with vexation and with envy; but of this I have observed no proofs, either in his works or in his memorandums; and as he was not given to dissembling, but a bold, blunt man, it seems likely that he would have taken some opportunity of expressing such feelings if they had really existed. The cold and cautious nature of Reynolds rendered him, in the opinion of Johnson, almost invulnerable;—but I think Hogarth would have found a way to plague even him, had he been so disposed. For the envy of Hogarth we have the authority of George Steevens, who lived near those times; but his assertion is to be received with caution, if not with distrust. He was no admirer of the man whose character he undertook to delineate, and in the same book where he depreciated the dead he defiled the living. Hogarth may have laid himself open to such a suspicion by the manner in which he opposed the foundation of public lectures, and the establishment of an Academy.

In the year 1760 a scheme, long contemplated and often agitated, was carried into execution—the establishment of an exhibition of the works of British artists. Concerning this undertaking Johnson thus writes to Baretti:—"The artists have established a yearly exhibition of pictures and statues, in imitation, I am told, of foreign academies. This year was the second exhibition. They please themselves much with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English school will rise much in reputation. Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands, which he deserves, among other excellencies, by retaining his kindness for Baretti. This exhibition has filled the heads of the artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious; since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time—of that time which never can return."

One of the biographers of Reynolds imputes the reflections contained in the conclusion of this letter "to that kind of envy which, perhaps, even Johnson felt, when comparing his own annual gains with those of his more fortunate friend." They are rather to be attributed to the sense and taste of Johnson, who could not but feel the utter worthlessness of the far greater part of the productions with which the walls of the exhibition room were covered. Artists are very willing to claim for their profession and its productions rather more than the world seems disposed to concede. It is very natural that this should be so;—but it is also natural that a man of Johnson's caste should be conscious of the dignity of his own pursuits, and agree with the vast majority of mankind in ranking a Homer, a Virgil, a Milton, or a Shakespeare immeasurably above all the artists that ever painted or carved. Johnson, in a conversation with Boswell, defined painting to be an art "which could illustrate, but could not inform."

The catalogue to this new exhibition was, however, graced with an introduction from the pen of the doctor—which contains the following passage:—"An exhibition of the works of art, being a spectacle new to the kingdom, has raised various opinions and conjectures among those who are unacquainted with the practice of foreign nations. Those who set their performances to general view have too often been considered the rivals of each other, as men actuated, if not by avarice, at least by vanity, as contending for superiority of fame, though not for a pecuniary prize. It cannot be denied or doubted that all who offer themselves to criticism are desirous of praise; this desire is not only innocent but virtuous, while it is undebased by artifice or unpolluted by envy: and of envy or artifice those men can never be accused, who, already enjoying all the honours and profits of their profession, are content to stand candidates for public notice with genius yet unexperienced and diligence yet unrewarded; who, without any hope of increasing their own reputation or interest, expose their

names and their works only that they may furnish an opportunity of appearance to the young, the diffident, and the neglected. The purpose of this exhibition is not to enrich the artist, but to advance the art; the eminent are not flattered with preference, nor the obscure insulted with contempt; whoever hopes to deserve public favour, is here invited to display his merit."

This is very specious and splendid; but the artists of fortune and reputation who planned and directed this work were more likely to seek stations of importance for their own paintings than to be solicitous about obtaining such for the labours of the nameless. Positions of precedence were likely to be eagerly contended for among the contributing artists; and it is probable that Johnson did not pen these conciliatory paragraphs without a secret smile.

In the year 1761 accumulating wealth began to have a visible effect on Reynolds's establishment. He quitted Newport Street, purchased a fine house on the west side of Leicester Square, furnished it with much taste, added a splendid gallery for the exhibition of his works, and an elegant dining-room; and finally taxed his invention and his purse in the production of a carriage, with wheels carved and gilt, and bearing on its panels the four seasons of the year. Those who flocked to see his new gallery were sometimes curious enough to desire a sight of this gay carriage; and the coachman, imitating the lackey who showed the gallery, earned a little money by opening the coach-house doors. His sister complained that it was too showy—"What!" said the painter, "would you have one like an apothecary's carriage?"

By what course of study he attained his skill in art Reynolds has not condescended to tell us; but of many minor matters we are informed by one of his pupils with all the scrupulosity of biography. His study was octagonal, some twenty feet long, sixteen broad, and about fifteen feet high. The window was small and square, and the sill nine feet from the floor. His sitter's chair moved on castors, and stood above the floor a foot and-a-half; he held his

palettes by a handle, and the sticks of his brushes were eighteen inches long. He wrought standing, and with great celerity. He rose early, breakfasted at nine, entered his study at ten, examined designs or touched unfinished portraits till eleven brought a sitter; painted till four; then dressed, and gave the evening to company.

His table was now elegantly furnished, and round it men of genius were often found. He was a lover of poetry and poets; they sometimes read their productions at his house, and were rewarded by his approbation, and occasionally by their portraits. Johnson was a frequent and a welcome guest: Percy was there too, with his ancient ballads and his old English lore; Goldsmith, with his latent genius, infantine vivacity, and plum-coloured coat; and Sterne, with his witty and licentious conversation. Burke and his brothers were constant guests; and Garrick was seldom absent, for he loved to be where greater men were. It was honourable to this distinguished artist that he perceived the worth of such men, and felt the honour which their society shed upon him; but it stopped not here—he often aided them with his purse, nor insisted upon repayment. It has, indeed, been said that he was uncivil to Johnson, and that once, on seeing him in his study, he turned his back on him and walked out; but to offer such an insult was as little in the nature of the courtly painter as to forgive it was in that of the haughty author. Reynolds seems to have loved the company of literary men more than that of artists; he had little to learn in his profession, and he naturally sought the society of those who had knowledge to impart. They have rewarded him with their approbation; he who has been praised by Burke, and who was loved by Johnson, has little chance of being forgotten.

He obtained the more equivocal approbation of Sterne, of whom he painted a very clever portrait, with the finger on the brow and the head full of thought. The author of "Tristram Shandy," speaking of his hero's father, says, "Then his whole attitude had been easy, natural, unforced, Reynolds himself, great and graceful as he paints, might

have painted him as he sat." The death of Sterne is said to have been hastened by the sarcastic raillery of a lady whom he encountered at the painter's table. He offended her by the grossness of his conversation, and, being in a declining state of health, suffered, if we are to believe the story, so severely from her wit—that he went home and died. That man must be singularly sensitive whose life is at the mercy of a woman's sarcasm: the most of us are content to live long after we are laughed at.*

Reynolds's next work, "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," has been highly praised. Figures of flesh and blood, however, never work well with figures of speech. Shadow and substance cannot enter into any conversation: the player standing irresolute between two such personations is an absurdity which the finest art—and it is not wanting—cannot redeem. The soldier pondering between his Catholic and Protestant doxies, in Hogarth's "March to Finchley," is natural and irresistibly comic; but David Garrick between his shadowy heroines is another affair.

Reynolds meditated a larger and more elaborate work—a composition displaying Garrick in his various powers as a comic and tragic actor. The principal figure was designed to be David himself in his own proper dress, speaking a prologue. A little retired were to appear groups of figures in the costume and character of the various heroes, from Hamlet down to Abel Drugger, in the representation of which the actor had obtained his fame. All these were to be portraits, gently modified according to character. This idea was never probably sketched; it seems strange and unnatural; there could be no unity, as they were all individual personations, which fitted each other in the ludicrous manner of the scraps composing a medley.

* To poor Sterne there is an inglorious memorial among the nettles of Bayswater burial-ground—a wretched headstone, inscribed with the more wretched rhymes of a tippling fraternity of Freemasons. The worst is not yet told: his body was sold by his landlady to defray his lodgings, and was recognised on the dissecting-table by one who had caroused with him, and enjoyed his witty and licentious conversation.

Garrick, however, who laboured under a double load of vanity as actor and author, was charmed with the idea, and cried out, "That will be the very thing which I desire: the only way, ——, that I can be handed down to posterity."

While this eminent actor's portrait was in progress, he mentioned to Reynolds that he once sat to Gainsborough, whose talents he did not admire, and whom he puzzled by altering the expression of his face. Every time the artist turned his back the actor put on a change of countenance, till the former in a passion dashed his pencils on the floor, and cried, "I believe I am painting from the devil rather than from a man." He sat often to Reynolds for different portraits: and on one of these occasions complained wofully of the unceasing sarcasms of Foote. "Never mind him," replied the shrewd painter —"he only shows his sense of his own inferiority: it is ever the least in talent who becomes malignant and abusive."

In the year 1762 the health of Reynolds having been impaired by constant labour, he went into Devonshire, accompanied by Johnson. He was welcomed with something of a silent approbation; for the populace of England know little, and care less, about either painting or poetry, or any such matters. The applause, too, of a man's native place is generally the last which he receives; for those who knew him in youth will not readily allow that in capacity he is superior to themselves, and are apt to regard the coming of his fame among them as an intrusion to be resented. But Reynolds was a man armed in that philosophic calmness which no disappointment could ruffle or disturb. He received a kind welcome from the learned and scientific Mudges, and was distinguished by the notice of all men remarkable for knowledge or station. A homage was paid him by one then young and nameless, who has since risen high. "Mr. Reynolds was pointed out to me (says Northcote) at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled. I got as near him as I could, from the

pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind." All who have souls to feel the influence of genius will applaud this touch of youthful enthusiasm.

A gentleman whom they visited indulged Johnson with new honey and clouted cream, of which he swallowed so liberally that his entertainer grew alarmed. To the prudent and discreet Reynolds the same person presented a large jar of very old nut oil—a professional prize which the painter carried home in his own coach, regarding it as worthy of his personal attention. He returned to London restored to health, and recommenced his interrupted labours.

His commissions were now so numerous and important, that he found it necessary to have several young persons to aid him in the minor details of his undertakings. It is seldom, however, that pupils work sedulously for their master's benefit; and it is not to every one who cries "Go to—I will be an artist," that nature has been prodigal. One pupil took to drinking, and soon died: others in various ways annoyed and disappointed him. He was, however, a clear-headed man and a zealous instructor, and seems on the whole to have turned the skill of his young men to some account. He informed Johnson that he was obtaining by his profession six thousand pounds a-year—a large income in those days, when portraits brought but twenty-five guineas each.

The Literary Club was founded by Johnson in 1764, and, amongst other men of eminence and talent, it numbered Reynolds. It is true that he assumed not to himself the distinction which literature bestows; but his friends knew too well the value of his presence to lose it by a fastidious observance of the title of their club. Poets, painters, and sculptors are all brothers; and, even had he been less eminent in his art, the sense, information, and manners of Reynolds would have made him an acceptable companion in the most intellectual society. He was, however, rather alarmed on hearing that people spoke of him as

"one of the wits," and exclaimed: "Why have they named me as a wit?—I never was a wit in my life." Reynolds had other merits, not unworthy of the consideration of men so out of favour with fortune at that time as Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Burke. He had a heavy purse and an hospitable table.

In 1764 he was attacked with a serious illness, which was equally sudden and alarming. He was cheered by the anxiety of many friends, and by the solicitude of Johnson, who wrote from Northamptonshire—"I did not hear of your sickness till I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escaped that part of your pain which every man must feel to whom you are known as you are known to me. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, or my own interest as by preserving you; in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I can call a friend." He to whom Johnson could thus write must have possessed many noble qualities; for no one could estimate human nature more truly than that illustrious man. Our artist recovered slowly and resumed his studies. The same year which alarmed England respecting the health of Reynolds deprived it of Hogarth.

Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces, Lady Elizabeth Keppel in the dress she wore when bridesmaid to the Queen, and Lady Waldegrave—one of the beauties of the day—appeared from Reynolds's pencil in 1765, and were regarded by Barry as among the happiest of his works. He commended them for the greatness of the style, the propriety of the characters, the force of light and shade, and the delicacy of the colouring.

Artists of eminence now rose thick and fast. Barry had made his appearance under the affectionate patronage of Edmund Burke. West landed from Italy to exhibit himself in the character of an historical painter; and the names of others, of scarcely less note, began to be heard

of. But the ascendancy of Reynolds was still maintained; he had charmed effectually the public eye; and kept the world chained to him by the strong and enduring link of vanity.

To the Shakespeare of Johnson, published in 1765, Reynolds furnished some notes, which show his good sense and good feeling, and are deficient only where no one could have expected him to excel—in black-letter reading and old dramatic lore. He had neither the daring ingenuity of a Warburton, nor the philosophical sagacity of a Johnson; but he tasted with as deep a feeling as either the rich excellence of the great dramatist.

From this period to the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768, Reynolds applied himself diligently to portraiture, and, though he produced few works wherein fancy mingled with and cheated reality, he executed many fine likenesses, among which that of *Mrs. Molesworth* is distinguished for ease and beauty, and the matronly grace and simplicity of costume. Ramsay, the son of a more distinguished father, Allan Ramsay, the poet, and Cotes, another painter of that time, had all the patronage of the court, and were in good employment. Walpole says of Ramsay, that he was the most sensible man of all living artists. Those men stood between Reynolds and royal favour; yet he painted in 1766 the Queen of Denmark, when she was about to go on her unhappy voyage. She seemed impressed with a presentiment of her coming misfortunes; for the artist always found her in tears. Of English artists Burke thus writes to Barry, who was studying at Rome:—"Here they are as you left them; Reynolds now and then striking out some wonder." He says in another letter,—"I found that Reynolds's expectation of what would be your great object of attention were the works of Michael Angelo, whom he considers as the Homer of painting. I could find that his own study had been much engrossed by that master, whom he still admires most. He confined himself for months to the Capella Sistina."

The Royal Academy was planned and proposed in 1768 by Chambers, West, Cotes, and Moser; the caution or timidity of Reynolds kept him for some time from assisting. A list of thirty members was made out; and West, a prudent and amiable man, called on Reynolds, and, in a conference of two hours' continuance, succeeded in persuading him to join them. He ordered his coach, and, accompanied by West, entered the room where his brother artists were assembled. They rose up to a man, and saluted him "President." He was affected by the compliment, but declined the honour until he had talked with Johnson and Burke; he went, consulted his friends, and having considered the consequences carefully, then consented. He expressed his belief at the same time that their scheme was a mere delusion: the King, he said, would not patronise nor even acknowledge them, as his majesty was well-known to be the friend of another body—the Incorporated Society of Artists.

The plan of that Society (established in 1765) had failed to embrace all the objects necessary for the advancement of art; several painters of reputation were not of their number; and the new institution, now formed for the purpose of extending the usefulness of such a scheme, was the work of many heads. Much that was old was adopted, something new was added, and the whole was carefully matured into a simple and consistent plan. The professed objects were an academy of design for the instruction of students, and an annual exhibition, which should contain the works of the academicians. and admit at the same time all other productions of merit. The funds for the furtherance of this design were to come from the fruits of the annual exhibition. The King, who at first looked coldly upon the project, as it seemed set up in opposition to the elder society, on further consideration offered voluntarily to supply all deficiencies annually from his private purse. This enabled the members to propose rewards for the encouragement of rising genius; and at a future period to bestow annuities on the most promising students, to defray

their expenses during their limited residence at Rome. Johnson was made professor of ancient literature, a station merely honorary; and Goldsmith professor of ancient history, another office without labour and without emolument—which secured him a place, says Percy, at the yearly dinner. Of this honour Goldsmith thus writes to his brother:—"I took it rather as a compliment to the institution than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to a man who wants a shirt." Lastly, the King, to give dignity to the Royal Academy of Great Britain, bestowed the honour of knighthood on the president; and seldom has any such distinction been bestowed amidst more universal approbation. Burke, in one of his admirable letters to Barry, says—"Reynolds is at the head of this academy. From his known public spirit, and warm desire of raising up art among us, he will, I have no doubt, contrive this institution to be productive of all the advantages that could possibly be derived from it; and whilst it is in such hands as his, we shall have nothing to fear from those shallows and quicksands upon which the Italian and French academies have lost themselves." Johnson was so elated with the honour of knighthood conferred on his friend, that he drank wine in its celebration, though he had abstained from it for several years; and Burke declared there was a natural fitness in the name for a title. Of his election as president Northcote says, what I would fain disbelieve, "that he refused to belong to the society on any other conditions." How this is to be reconciled with his confusion and surprise at being hailed president, as above described, I cannot determine. The gentleman who relates it is cautious and candid, and not likely to hazard such an assertion lightly. Of Sir Joshua's capacity to fill the station of president, and to render it respectable by his courtesy and embellish it by his talents, no one ever entertained a doubt; but it was unworthy of him to stipulate for it, and I hope Northcote is for once mistaken.

He voluntarily imposed on himself the task of composing

and delivering discourses for the instruction of students in the principles and practice of their art. Of these he wrote fifteen: all distinguished for clearness of conception and for variety of knowledge. They were delivered during a long succession of years, and in a manner cold and sometimes embarrassed, and even unintelligible. His deafness, and his abhorrence of oratorical pomp of utterance, may have contributed to this defect. A nobleman who was present at the delivery of the first of the series, said,—"Sir Joshua, you read your discourse in a tone so low that I scarce heard a word you said." "That was to my advantage," replied the president, with a smile.

He distinguished himself in the first exhibition of the Academy by paintings of the Duchess of Manchester and her son, as "Diana disarming Cupid;" Lady Blake, as "Juno receiving the cestus from Venus;" and Miss Morris, as "Hope nursing Love." The grace of design and beauty of colouring in these pictures could not conceal the classical affectation of their titles, and the poverty of invention in applying such old and exhausted compliments. Poor Miss Morris was no dandler of babes, but a delicate and sensitive spinster, unfit for the gross wear and tear of the stage —who fainted in the representation of Juliet, and died soon after. Of Lady Blake's title to represent Juno, I have nothing to say—a modern lord would make an indifferent Jupiter; and what claim a Duchess of Manchester, with her last-born in her lap, could have to the distinction of Diana, it is difficult to guess.

Sir Joshua guided his pen with better taste than his pencil in the first year of his presidency. He, at the request of Burke, addressed a letter of advice to Barry, which made a strong impression on the mind of that singular man. "Whoever," says Sir Joshua, "is resolved to excel in painting, or indeed in any other art, must bring all his mind to bear upon that one object from the moment that he rises till he goes to bed: the effect of every object that meets a painter's eye, may give him a lesson, provided his mind is calm, unembarrassed with other objects, and

open to instruction. This general attention, with other studies, connected with the art, which must employ the artist in his closet, will be found sufficient to fill up life, if it were much longer than it is. Were I in your place, I would consider myself as playing a great game, and never suffer the little malice and envy of my rivals to draw off my attention from the main object, which, if you pursue with a steady eye, it will not be in the power of all the Cicerones in the world to hurt you. Whilst they are endeavouring to prevent the gentlemen from employing the young artists, instead of injuring them, they are in my opinion doing them the greatest service.

"Whoever has great views, I would recommend to him, whilst at Rome, rather to live on bread and water than lose advantages which he can never hope to enjoy a second time, and which he will find only in the Vatican; where, I will engage, no cavalier sends his students to copy for him. The Capella Sistina is the production of the greatest genius that was ever employed in the arts; it is worth considering by what principles that stupendous greatness of style is produced; and endeavouring to produce something of your own on those principles, will be a more advantageous method of study than copying the St. Cecilia in the Borghese, or the Herodias of Guido, which may be copied to eternity without contributing a jot towards making a man a more able painter. If you neglect visiting the Vatican often, and particularly the Capella Sistina, you will neglect receiving that peculiar advantage which Rome can give above all other cities in the world. In other places you will find casts from the antique, and capital pictures of the great painters; but it is there only that you can form an idea of the dignity of the art, as it is there only that you can see the works of Michael Angelo and Raphael." Barry, who at that time was awed by the fame of Reynolds, received this letter with thankfulness, and acknowledged it with civility; but his precipitancy of nature hindered him from profiting much by it.

When Dr. Goldsmith published his "Deserted Village,"

he inscribed it to Sir Joshua in a very kind and touching manner :—"The only dedication I ever made," says the doctor, "was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you." The poet was a frequent guest, with Johnson, at the table of the painter, which was adorned and enlivened by the presence and the talents of Miss Reynolds—herself a painter and a poetess, and eminent for her good sense and ready wit. This lady was a great favourite of Johnson, who was fond of her company, and acknowledged oftener than once the influence of her conversation.

I have already said that Reynolds was an admirer of Pope. A fan, which the poet presented to Martha Blount, and on which he had painted, with his own hand, the story of Cephalus and Procris, with the motto "Auri Veni," was to be sold by auction, and Sir Joshua sent a person to bid for it as far as thirty guineas. The messenger imagined that he said thirty shillings, and allowed the relic to go for two pounds; a profit, however, was allowed to the purchaser, and it was put into the hands of the president. "See," said he, to his pupils who gathered round him, "see the painting of Pope; this must always be the case when the work is taken up from idleness, and is laid aside when it ceases to amuse; it is like the work of one who paints only for amusement. Those who are resolved to excel must go to their work, willing or unwilling, morning, noon, and night; they will find it to be no play, but very hard labour." This fan was afterwards stolen out of his study; as a relic of that importance cannot be openly displayed to the world by the person who abstracts it, it is not easy to imagine what manner of enthusiast the thief could be.

At a festive meeting, where Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Douglas, and Goldsmith were conspicuous, the idea of composing a set of extempore epitaphs on one another was started. Two very indifferent lines of ordinary waggery by Garrick offended Goldsmith so much that he avenged himself by composing the celebrated "Poem of Retaliation," in which he exhibits the characters of

his companions with great liveliness and talent. The character of Sir Joshua Reynolds is drawn with discrimination and delicacy; it resembles, indeed, his own portraits, for the features are a little softened and the expression a little elevated; it is, nevertheless, as near the truth as the affection of the poet would permit him to come. The lines have a melancholy interest, from being the last which the author wrote.

> "Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
> He has not left a wiser or better behind;
> His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
> His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;
> Still born to improve us in every part,
> His pencil our faces, his manners our heart."

That he was an improver of human faces no one could be more conscious than Goldsmith; his portrait by Reynolds is sufficiently unlovely, yet it was said by the artist's sister to be the most flattered likeness of all her brother's works.

In 1771 James Northcote became his pupil. Of which he thus speaks:—"As from the earliest period of my being able to make any observation, I had conceived Reynolds to be the greatest painter that ever lived, it may be conjectured what I felt when I found myself in his house as a scholar." He unites with Malone in assuring us that such were the gentleness of Sir Joshua's manners, the refinement of his habits, the splendour of his establishment, and the extent of his fame—that almost all the men in the three kingdoms, who were distinguished in literature, in art, at the bar, in the senate, or in the field, might occasionally be found feasting at his social and well-furnished table. The following description of one of the painter's dinners is by the skilful hand of Courteney:—"There was something singular in the style and economy of his table, that contributed to pleasantry and good-humour: a coarse, inelegant plenty, without any regard to order or arrangement. A table prepared for seven or eight, often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this

pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives and forks, plates and glasses, succeeded. The attendance was in the same style; and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that you might be supplied before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses for dinners, to save time and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua could never be persuaded to replace them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial animated bustle amongst his guests, our host sat perfectly composed, always attentive to what was said, never minding what was eat or drank, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself. Temporal and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors, and musicians composed the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord. At five o'clock precisely dinner was served, whether all the invited guests were arrived or not. Sir Joshua was never so fashionably ill-bred as to wait an hour perhaps for two or three persons of rank or title, and put the rest of the company out of humour by this invidious distinction."

Of the rough abundance which covered his table Courteney says enough; as to the character of the guests, we have the testimony of Dunning, afterwards Lord Ashburton. He had accepted an invitation to dinner from the President, and happened to be the first guest who arrived; a large company was expected. "Well, Sir Joshua," he said, "and who have you got to dine with you to-day? The last time I dined in your house, the company was of such a sort that by —— I believe all the rest of the world enjoyed peace for that afternoon." "This observation," says Northcote, "was by no means ill-applied; for as Sir

Joshua's companions were chiefly men of genius, they were often disputatious and vehement in argument." Miss Reynolds seems to have been as indifferent about the good order of her domestics, and the appearance of her dishes at table, as her brother was about the active distribution of his wine and venison. Plenty was the splendour, and freedom was the elegance, which Malone and Boswell found in the entertainments of the artist.

The masculine freedom of Johnson's conversation was pleasing in general to Reynolds; it was not, however, always restrained by a sense of courtesy, or by the memory of benefits. It is related by Mrs. Thrale that once at her table Johnson lamented the perishable nature of the materials of painting, and recommended copper in place of wood or canvas. Reynolds urged the difficulty of finding a plate of copper large enough for historical subjects; he was interrupted by Johnson. "What foppish obstacles are these? here is Thrale, who has a thousand-tun copper; you may paint it all round if you will, I suppose it will serve him to brew in afterwards." When Johnson's pen was in his hand, and it was seldom out of it, he spoke of painting in another mood, and of Reynolds with civility and affection. "Genius," he says, "is chiefly exerted in historical pictures, and the art of the painter of portraits is often lost in the obscurity of the subject. But it is in painting as in life; what is greatest is not always best. *I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in renewing tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead.* Every man is always present to himself, and has, therefore, little need of his own resemblance; nor can desire it, but for the sake of those whom he loves, and by whom he hopes to be remembered. This use of the art is a natural and reasonable consequence of affection: and though, like all other human actions, it is often complicated with pride, yet even such pride is more laudable than that by which palaces are

covered with pictures, that, however excellent, neither imply the owner's virtue nor excite it." By an opinion so critically sagacious, and an apology for portrait-painting, which appeals so effectually to the kindly side of human nature, Johnson repaid a hundred dinners.

Reynolds now raised his price for a portrait to thirty-five guineas, admitted some more pupils to the advantages of his studio, and leaving them to forward draperies and make copies of some of his pictures in his absence, made a visit to Paris. Of the object of this journey there is no account, nor has he made any note of his own emotions on observing the works of the French artists. He returned, and resumed his labours—which were too pressing to permit him to visit Bennet Langton, at his country seat—though they allowed him to obey the king's wish, and see the installation of the Knights of the Garter, in Windsor ;—on which occasion his curiosity paid the tax of a new hat and a gold snuff-box, pilfered in the crowd.

Young Northcote acquired skill rapidly under Sir Joshua : he ere long painted one of the servants so like nature that a tame macaw mistook the picture for the original, against whom it had a grudge, and flew to attack the canvas with beak and wing. The experiment of the creature's mistake was several times repeated with the same success, and Reynolds compared it to the ancient painting where a bunch of grapes allured the birds : "I see" (said he) "that birds and beasts are as good judges of pictures as men."

The "Ugolino" was painted in 1773. The subject is contained in the "Commedia" of Dante, and is said by Cumberland to have been suggested to our artist by Goldsmith. The merit lies in the execution ; and even this seems of disputable excellence. The lofty and stern sufferer of Dante appears on Reynolds's canvas like a famished mendicant, deficient in any commanding qualities of intellect, and regardless of his dying children, who cluster around his knees. It is indeed a subject too painful to contemplate ; it has a feeling too deep for art, and certainly demanded a hand conversant with severer things than the

lips and necks of ladies, and the well-dressed gentlemen of England. It is said to have affected Captain Cooke's Omiah so much, that he imagined it a scene of real distress, and ran to support the expiring child. The Duke of Dorset paid the artist four hundred guineas, and took home the picture. His next piece, the "Children in the Wood," arose from an accident. A beggar's infant, who was his model for some other picture, overpowered by continuing long in one position, fell asleep, and presented the image of one of the babes, which he immediately secured. No sooner had he done this than the child turned in its sleep, and presented the idea of the other babe, which he instantly sketched, and from them afterwards made the finished picture. Accident often supplies what study cannot find; for nature, when unrestrained, throws itself into positions of great ease and elegance.

In the month of July he visited Oxford, where he was received with some distinction, and admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law. At that period he was a member of the Royal, the Antiquarian, and Dilettanti Societies. When he presented himself to the audience, and bowed, and took his seat, there was much applause: Dr. Beattie accompanied him, and received the same honours. It seems a singular token of respect to salute a man with a title to which he can neither lay claim by his learning nor by his pursuits; but in our own time we have seen Blucher and Platoff dubbed Doctors of Law in the same venerable place. From Oxford Reynolds went to visit a noble duke, in compliance with many pressing solicitations: he hastened into his presence, and was mortified with a cold reception. The artist, it seems, had the incivility to appear in his boots!

On his return to London he painted the celebrated picture of Dr. Beattie in his Oxonian dress as Doctor of Laws, with his book on the "Immutability of Truth" below his arm, and the Angel of Truth beside him, overpowering Scepticism, Sophistry, and Infidelity. One of these prostrate figures has a lean and profligate look, and resembles

Voltaire; in another, which is plump and full-bodied, some one recognised a resemblance to Hume; nor is it unlikely that the artist had Gibbon in his thoughts when he introduced Infidelity. The vexation of Goldsmith when he saw this painting overflowed all bounds. "It is unworthy" (he said) "of a man of eminence like you, Sir Joshua, to descend to flattery such as this. How could you think of degrading so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie! Beattie and his book will be forgotten in ten years; but your allegorical picture and the fame of Voltaire will live to your disgrace as a flatterer." There was as much good sense as envy in this. The picture was an inconsiderate compliment, and arose from the false estimate which Reynolds had formed of the genius of Beattie. The royal favour and the applause of the church are excellent in their day, and may float a man on to fortune; but posterity is an inexorable tribunal which overthrows all false estimates of character, all unsound reputations, and decides upon merit and genius alone. Hume, and Voltaire, and Gibbon—injurious as their works have been to the best interests of mankind—have survived the attack of Beattie and the insult of Reynolds.

About the close of summer of 1773 he visited his native place, and was elected Mayor of Plympton—a distinction so much to his liking that he assured the king, whom he accidentally encountered on his return in one of the walks at Hampton Court, that it gave him more pleasure than any other he had ever received—"excepting," (he added—recollecting himself)—"excepting that which your Majesty so graciously conferred on me—the honour of knighthood."

The arts now met with a repulse from the church, which is often mentioned with sorrow by the painters, and even considered as an injury deserving annual reprobation. It happened that Reynolds and West were dining with the Bishop of Bristol, who was also Dean of St. Paul's, and their conversation turned upon religious paintings, and upon the naked appearance of the English churches in the absence of such ornaments. West generously offered his

entertainer a painting of "Moses and the Laws" for the Cathedral of St. Paul, and Reynolds tendered a "Nativity." As this offer was in a manner fulfilling the original design of Sir Christopher Wren, the Dean imagined it would be received with rapture by all concerned. He waited on the king, who gave his ready consent; but Terrick, Bishop of London, objected at once, and no persuasion could move him, no arguments could change his fixed and determined opposition. A little of the old spirit, which ejected the whole progeny of saints and Madonnas out of the reformed church, was strong in this Bishop of London. "No," (said he) "whilst I live and have power, no popish paintings shall enter the doors of the metropolitan church." The project was dropped and never again revived.

A portrait of Burke, which Reynolds painted at the request of Thrale, is the only reason that has ever been assigned for the hostility which Barry now began to show, first to Burke, and afterwards to Sir Joshua. Barry was a proud artist, and a suspicious man: he could not be insensible that the President had amassed a fortune, and obtained high fame in abiding by the lucrative branch of the profession, whilst he had perched upon the unproductive bough of historical composition, and had not been rewarded with bread. He followed his own ideas in the course he pursued, but probably he reflected that he was also obeying the reiterated injunctions of Sir Joshua, who constantly, in his public lectures and private counsels, admonished all who loved what was noble and sublime to study the great masters, and labour at the grand style. This study had brought Barry to a garret and a crust; the neglect of it had spread the table of Reynolds with that sluttish abundance which Courteney describes, and put him in a coach with gilded wheels and the seasons painted on its panels. To all this was added the close friendship of his patron, Burke, with the fortunate painter. Barry fancied — in short—that his own merits were overlooked, and that something like a combination was formed to thwart and depress him. Nor is the mild and prudent Reynolds himself

altogether free from the suspicion of having felt a little jealousy towards one who spoke well, and thought well, and painted well, and who *might* rise to fame and opulence rivalling his own.

Goldsmith was removed by death, in 1774, from the friendship of Reynolds, who was deeply affected; he did not touch his pencil for a whole day afterwards. He acted as executor—an easy trust—for there was nothing left but a large debt and a confused mass of papers. He directed his funeral, which was respectable and private, and aided largely in the monument which stands in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. Nollekens cut the marble: Johnson composed the epitaph.

To the society called the Dilettanti Club some ascribe the origin of all those associations whose object is the encouragement of art. To this club, as has been duly mentioned, Sir Joshua belonged, and to his pencil many of the members are indebted for the transmission of their looks—and names—to posterity. Those portraits are contained in two pictures, in the manner of Paul Veronese, and amount in all to fourteen. He was more worthily employed when Johnson sat to him in 1775: the picture shows him holding a manuscript near his face, and pondering as he reads. The near-sighted "Cham of literature" reproved the painter in these words—"It is not friendly to hand down to posterity the imperfections of any man." Mrs. Thrale interposed, and said—"You will not be known to posterity for your defects, though Sir Joshua should do his worst." The artist was right—he gave individuality and character to the head.

His practice introduced him occasionally to strange acquaintances. A gentleman, who returned rich from the East, sat for his portrait, but was called into the country before it was quite finished. He apologised by letter for his absence, and requested that the work might be completed. "My friends," said he "tell me of the Titian tint and the Guido air—these you can add without my appearance."

Sir Joshua was chosen a member of the Academy of Florence, and in consequence he painted, and presented, a portrait of himself in the dress of his Oxford honours, which is placed in the Gallery of Eminent Artists in that city. This prudent Italian Academy requires by its laws the portrait of every new member, painted by his own hand—a regulation which has accumulated a very curious collection. Sir Joshua's performance raised the reputation of English art in Florence.

It was Sir Joshua's opinion that no man ever produced more than half-a-dozen original works in his whole lifetime; and when he painted the "Strawberry Girl," he said, "that is one of *my* originals." On looking at this work it is not easy to see the cause of the artist's preference; but genius sometimes forms curious estimates of its own productions: some lucky triumph over an obstinate difficulty—some work produced with great ease in an hour of enjoyment—or one, the offspring of much consideration, and the crowning of some new experiment, is apt to impress an idea of excellence on the maker's mind which his work fails to communicate to the cold spectator.

From secret envy he had not hitherto escaped; he was now to experience an open attack, and that from one of his own profession. A painter of the name of Hone—a man of some experience in portrait-painting, but of very moderate talents—sent to the annual exhibition, "The Pictorial Conjurer, displaying his whole art of Optical Deception." This was meant as a satire upon the style of Sir Joshua, and of the use which he was not unwilling to make of the postures and characters of earlier artists. The indignation of the friends of Reynolds was great; they rejected the offensive picture in the exhibition, and defended him with tongue and pen. "He has been accused of plagiarism," says one, "for having borrowed attitudes from ancient masters. Not only candour, but criticism must deny the force of this charge. When a single posture is imitated from an historic picture, and applied to a portrait in a different dress, this is not plagiarism, but quotation; and a quotation from a

great author, with a novel application of the sense, has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste, and may have more merit than the original." The parallel entirely fails. To give a new turn to the sense of a sentence, or avail himself of a line or two from an early author, is allowed to a modern poet. But should he bring away an entire character, and employ it with the whole costume of thought unaltered, then he is a plagiarist; and such in many instances seems to have been Sir Joshua. His best defence is that he borrowed to improve, and stole that he might show his own power of colouring. Most of the songs of Burns, works unrivalled for nature and passion, are constructed on the stray verse or vagrant line of some forgotten bard. But then the poet only employed those as the starting-notes to his own inimitable strains, and never stole the fashion and hue of any entire lyric.

An attack such as that of Hone seemed to affect the friends of the artist more than it did himself; he said nothing, and the subject passed to oblivion. One of a more serious nature, and less easy to refute, was made in some of the public prints concerning the instability of the colours which he used in painting. He was accused of employing lake and carmine—colours of a nature liable to speedy decay—and, in short, making frequent experiments at the expense of others. It was urged, that he knew those glossy and gaudy colours would not endure long; and it was hinted, that though the experiments which he made might be for the advancement of art, they were injurious to individuals, who purchased blooming works, which were destined to fade in their possession like the flowers of the field.

Of the danger of using such colours Sir Joshua was at length convinced, but not until strong symptoms of decay had appeared in many of his own works; as yet he zealously defended the propriety of his experiments with his pen as well as in conversation. In one of his memorandums he says, with much complacency:—"I was always willing to believe that my uncertainty of proceeding in my works

—that is, my never being sure of my hand, and my frequent alterations—arose from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in anything short of a high degree of excellence. I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring; no man, indeed, could teach me. If I have never settled with respect to colouring, let it at the same time be remarked, that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every kind of excellence that I saw in the works of others, without considering that there are in colouring, as in style, excellencies which are incompatible with each other. We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring changed their manner; while others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effect of colour, and, by leaving out every colour in its turn, showed each colour that I could do without it. As I alternately left out every colour, I tried every new colour; and often, as is well known, failed. I was influenced by no idle or foolish affectation. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence. This is the only merit I can assume to myself from my conduct in that respect."

It is to be regretted that he continued these experiments for a long course of years, and that they infected, more or less, many of the finest of his works. He was exceedingly touchy of temper on the subject of colouring, and reproved Northcote with some sharpness for insinuating that Kneller used vermilion in his flesh-colour. "What signifies," said he, "what a man used who could not colour?—you may use it if you will." He never allowed his pupils to make experiments, and on observing one of them employing some unusual compounds, exclaimed, "That boy will never do good, with his gallipots of varnish and foolish mixtures." The secret of Sir Joshua's own preparations was carefully kept—he permitted not even the most favoured of his pupils to acquire the knowledge of his colours—he had all securely locked, and allowed no one to

enter where these treasures were deposited. What was the use of all this secrecy?—those who stole the mystery of his colours could not use it unless they stole his skill and talent also. A man who, like Reynolds, chooses to take upon himself the double office of public and private instructor of students in painting, ought not, surely, to retain to himself a secret in the art which he considers to be of real value.

He was fond of seeking into the secrets of the old painters; and dissected some of their performances without remorse or scruple, to ascertain their mode of laying on colour and finishing with effect. Titian he conceived to be the great master-spirit in portraiture; and no enthusiast in usury ever sought more incessantly for the secret of the philosopher's stone than did Reynolds to possess himself of the whole theory and practice of the Venetian. But this was a concealed pursuit; he disclosed his discoveries to none; he lectured on Michael Angelo, and discoursed on Raphael; but he studied and dreamed of Titian. "To possess," said the artist, "a real fine picture by that great master, I would sell all my gallery—I would willingly ruin myself." The capital old paintings of the Venetian school, which Sir Joshua's experiments destroyed, were not few, and it may be questioned if his discoveries were a compensation for their loss. The wilful destruction of a work of genius is a sort of murder, committed for the sake of art; and the propriety of the act is very questionable. "I considered myself," said he, in a private memorandum preserved by Malone, "as playing a great game, and, instead of beginning to save money, I laid it out as fast as I got it in purchasing the best examples of art; I even borrowed money for this purpose. The possessing portraits by Titian, Vandyke, Rembrandt, etc., I considered as the best kind of wealth. By this kind of contemplation we are taught to think in their way, and sometimes to attain their excellence. If I had never seen any of the works of Correggio, I should never, perhaps, have remarked in nature the expression which I find in one of his pieces: or,

if I had remarked it, I might have thought it too difficult, or perhaps impossible, to be executed."

In the summer of 1776 Northcote informed Sir Joshua of his intention of visiting Italy, to confirm his own notions of excellence by studying in the Vatican. This communication, which deprived him of a profitable assistant, was received with much complacency; he was sensible of the advantages obtained from his pupil's pencil, and said so with much freedom and kindness. "Remember," said the master to his departing friend, "that something more must be done than that which did formerly—Kneller, Lely, and Hudson will not do now." He seldom omitted an opportunity of insulting the memories of Kneller and Lely. He might have spared them, now that the world admitted him to have excelled them.

Reynolds was skilful in compliments. When he painted the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse, he wrought his name on the border of her robe. The great actress, conceiving it to be a piece of classic embroidery, went near to examine, and seeing the words, smiled. The artist bowed and said, "I could not lose this opportunity of sending my name to posterity on the hem of your garment." He painted his name, in the same manner, on the embroidered edge of the drapery of Lady Cockburn's portrait. When this picture was taken into the exhibition room, such was the sweetness of the conception, and the splendour of the colouring, that the painters, who were busied with their own performances, acknowledged its beauty by clapping their hands. Such eager admiration is of rare occurrence amongst brothers of the trade.

The tardy praise which he wrung from artists was amply compensated by that of others. The surly applause of Johnson, and the implied admiration of Goldsmith, were nothing compared to the open and avowed approbation of Burke. That extraordinary man possessed a natural sagacity, which opened the door of every mystery in art or literature; his praise is always warm, but well placed: he feels wisely and thinks in the true spirit. His debt of

gratitude to Sir Joshua was never liquidated by affected rapture. The artist had reason to be proud of the affection of Burke. He sometimes asked his opinion on the merit of a work—it was given readily—Sir Joshua would then shake his head and say, "Well, it pleases you; but it does not please me; there is a sweetness wanting in the expression which a little pains will bestow—there! I have improved it." This, when translated into the common language of life, means, "I must not let this man think that he is as wise as myself; but show him that I can reach one step at least higher than his admiration."

That Reynolds was a close observer of nature, his works sufficiently show; he drew his excellence from innumerable sources; paid attention to all opinions; from the rudest minds he sometimes obtained valuable hints, and babes and sucklings were among his tutors. It was one of his maxims that the gestures of children, being all dictated by nature, are graceful; and that affectation and distortion come in with the dancing-master. He watched the motions of the children who came to his gallery, and was pleased when he saw them forget themselves, and mimic unconsciously the airs and attitudes of the portraits on the wall. They were to him more than Raphael had ever been. "I cannot but think," he thus expresses himself in one of his memorandums, "that Apelles's method of exposing his pictures for public criticism was a very good one. I do not know why the judgment of the vulgar, on the mechanical parts of painting, should not be as good as any whatever; for instance, as to whether such or such a part be natural or not. If one of these persons should ask why half the face is black, or why there is such a spot of black, or snuff as they will call it, under the nose, I should conclude from thence that the shadows are thick or dirtily painted, or that the shadow under the nose was too much resembling snuff, when, if those shadows had exactly resembled the transparency and colour of nature, they would have no more been taken notice of than the shadow in nature itself." Such were the sound and sagacious opinions of this eminent man

when he sat down to think for himself and speak from practice.

He had a decided aversion to loquacious artists; and spoke little himself whilst he was busied at his easel. When artists love to be admired for what they say, they will have less desire to be admired for what they paint. He had, in truth, formed a very humble notion of the abstract meditation which art requires, and imagined it to be more of a practical dexterity of hand than the offspring of intellect and skill. He assured Lord Monboddo that painting scarcely deserved the name of study; it was more that sort of work (he said) which employed the mind without fatiguing it, and was thereby more conducive to individual happiness than the practice of any other profession. This Northcote pronounces to be the speech of a mere portrait-manufacturer; but genius, when congenially employed, is seldom conscious of exertion.

Dr. Johnson, when questioned by Boswell on the merit of portraits, said,—"Sir, their chief excellence is being like; I would have them in the dress of their times, to preserve the accuracy of history—truth, sir, is of the greatest value in these things." To give the exact form and presence of the man, and animate him with his natural portion of intellect, and no more, requires a skilful hand, and a head which the love of flattering is unable to seduce from the practice of the truth. To paint a likeness is, however, a very common effort of a very common mind; but to bestow proper expression, just character, and unstudied ease, is infinitely difficult. Reynolds said he could teach any boy whom chance might throw in his way to paint a likeness. "To paint like Velasquez is another thing. He did at once, and with ease, what we cannot accomplish with time and labour. Portraits, as well as written characters of men, should be decidedly marked, otherwise they will be insipid, and truth should be preferred before freedom of hand."

In 1777 he had delivered seven discourses on art, which he collected into a volume, and, that they might want no

attraction to recommend them to popularity, he inscribed them to the King in a dedication written with care and caution, and neither deficient in self-approbation nor unadorned by classical allusion.

He was an ardent lover of his profession, and ever as ready to defend it when assailed as to add to its honours by the works of his hands. Dr. Tucker, the famous Dean of Gloucester, asserted before the Society for encouraging Commerce and Manufactures, that a pin-maker was a more useful and valuable member of society than Raphael. When Sir Joshua was informed of this he was nettled, and said, with some asperity—"That is an observation of a very narrow mind: a mind that is confined to the mere object of commerce—that sees with a microscopic eye but a part of the great machine of the economy of life, and thinks that small part which he sees to be the whole. Commerce is the means, not the end, of happiness or pleasure: the end is a rational enjoyment by means of arts and sciences. It is therefore the highest degree of folly to set the means in a higher rank of esteem than the end. It is as much as to say, that the brickmaker is superior to the architect."

Sir Joshua now painted another portrait of Johnson at the request of Mr. Thrale. This seems to have been accomplished without any of those bickerings which distinguished the former sittings. Reynolds observed once to an acquaintance, that knowledge was not the only advantage to be obtained in the company of such a man—that the importance of truth and the baseness of falsehood were inculcated more by example than by precept, and that all who were of the Johnsonian school were remarkable for a love of truth and accuracy. One day Boswell was speaking in high commendation of the Doctor's skill and felicity in drawing characters: Sir Joshua said—"He is undoubtedly admirable in this; but, in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they have, whether of good or bad." It would be difficult to express more neatly and simply the character of our artist's style of portraiture. He bestowed

beauty and mind with no sparing hand. Every captain has the capacity of a general, and every lord a soul fit for wielding the energies of an empire.

Reynolds was now fifty-four years old—he had acquired fame and amassed a fortune—yet such was his unabated activity, that he continued to paint with the avidity of one labouring for bread; nor is there any proof that he even wished to confine himself to personages of note and talent. He raised his price to fifty guineas, without lessening the number of his commissions: he was in the wane of life; the wise were anxious to secure as many proofs of his genius as they could before he went—and the rich were glad of the increased price, for it excluded the poor from indulging in the luxury of vanity.

This fortunate man began now to have warnings of the kind which wait plentifully on advancing years. Goldsmith had gone, Garrick followed—and bodily decay was visibly creeping over Johnson. Reynolds himself—a frugal liver and a cautious man—was still hale and robust; he had painted one generation, was painting a second, and, in the opinion of the third, he promised to last to give them the benefit of his skill. He had no thought, indeed, of retiring to spend in leisure the money he had gathered: painting was to him enjoyment; and he knew that, if he withdrew from the scene, much of his social distinction would fall from about him. The powerful and the rich are soon willing to forget men of genius when they cease to minister to their vanity or their pleasures, and are no longer the talk of the town. Reynolds was aware of this—no one had yet appeared capable of disputing with him the title of first portrait-painter of the age:—with this spell he had opened the doors as well as the purses of the proud and the far-descended, and taken his seat among the eminent of the land: and here he was resolved to remain.

In the year 1780 the Royal Academy was removed to Somerset House—rooms were prepared for the reception of the paintings—and models and apartments selected for the keeper and the secretary. Sir Joshua taxed his invention

in the embellishment of the ceiling of the library, and could think of nothing better than Theory sitting on a cloud—a figure dark and mystical, which fails to explain its own meaning—nor is the meaning much to the purpose when it is explained. To the exhibition of this year he sent the portrait of Miss Beauclerc as Spenser's "Una," and the heads of Gibbon the historian and Lady Beaumont. He also painted for the Royal Academy the portrait of Sir William Chambers, and that likeness of himself which contains the bust of Michael Angelo. It was one of the pleasant delusions of his life that the divinity of Michael Angelo inspired him in his productions—he was ever calling on his name—invoking him by his works—and making five guineas an hour in the belief that the severe majesty of Buonarotti was at least dimly seen among the curls and flounces, laced waistcoats, and well-powdered wigs of his English nobility.

He was questioned by Northcote on the merits of two French portraits by Madame Le Brun, which were then exhibited in London: "Pray, what do you think of them, Sir Joshua?" Reynolds: "That they are very fine." Northcote: "How fine?" Reynolds: "As fine as those of any painter." Northcote: "As fine as those of any painter! —do you mean living or dead?" Reynolds, sharply: "Either living or dead." Northcote: "Good God! what, as fine as Vandyke?" Reynolds: "Yes, and finer." Reynolds had seen—as men see now—the wreck of high hopes and lofty expectations; he rated vulgar popularity at its worth, and disdained to interfere with the brief summer of Madame Le Brun.

A series of allegorical figures for the window of New College Chapel at Oxford employed his pencil during the year 1780, and for several succeeding years. There are seven personifications in all—Faith, Hope, Charity, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence. That Reynolds has conferred a healthier hue and more splendid colours on those seven abstract personages than some of them enjoyed before, I readily allow; but they are a cold and unnatural

progeny, and are regarded only as embellishments. Without nature there can be no sentiment—without flesh and blood there can be no sympathy. In the group of Charity, a critic discovers that the "fondling of the infant, the importunity of the boy, and the placid affection of the girl, together with the divided attention of the mother, are all distinguishably and judiciously marked with the knowledge of character for which the great artist who gave this design is so justly celebrated." This passage has surely been written to show how prettily words may be grouped together without meaning. Where is the *charity* in a mother taking charge of her own children?

The "Nativity," a composition of thirteen figures, and in dimensions twelve feet by eighteen, was designed to surmount the seven "Allegories." This was sold to the Duke of Rutland for 1200 guineas, and was burnt at Belvoir Castle, with many other noble performances. It had the fault of almost all Sir Joshua's historical works; it was cold, laboured, and uninspired. He had no revelations of heavenly things, such as descended on Raphael; the visions which presented themselves were unembodied or dim, and flitted before his sight like the shadowy progeny of Banquo. If angels of light, ministers of grace, and souls of just men made perfect, could have sat for their portraits, who could have painted them so divinely as Reynolds?

Having painted a "Thais" with a torch in her hand, a "Death of Dido," and a Boy hearkening to a marvellous story, and placed them in the exhibition, he set off on a tour among the galleries of the Continent. The fame of these three new pictures followed him. The "Dido," by the loveliness of her face and the rich colouring of her robes, drew immense crowds to Somerset House. Meanwhile he pursued his journey. He stopped at Mechlin, to see the celebrated altar-piece by Rubens, of which he was told the following story:—A citizen commissioned the picture, and Rubens having made his sketch, employed Van Egmont, one of his scholars, to dead-colour the canvas, for the full-sized painting. On this the citizen said to

Rubens,—"Sir, I bespoke a picture from the hand of the master, not from that of the scholar." "Content you, my friend," said the artist, "this is but a preliminary process, which I always entrust to other hands." "The citizen," said Sir Joshua, "was satisfied, and Rubens proceeded with the picture, which appears to me to have no indications of neglect in any part: on the contrary, I think it has been, for it is a little faded, one of his best pictures, though those who know this circumstance pretend to see Van Egmont's inferior genius through the touches of Rubens."

At Antwerp he noticed a young artist named De Gree, who had been designed for the church, but loved painting more, and pursued it with success. He came afterwards to England. Reynolds generously gave him fifty guineas, which the young man, as pious as he was enthusiastic, transmitted home for the use of his aged parents.

When Reynolds returned to London he found that a new candidate for fame had made his appearance, and promised to become fashionable. This was Opie, who, introduced by Wolcot, and remarkable alike by the humility of his birth and the brightness of his talents, rose suddenly into reputation and employment. It is true that he had then but moderate skill, and that the works which the world of fashion applauded were his worst; but he was a peasant, and therefore a novelty; he could paint, and that was a wonder. So eager were the nobility and gentry to crowd into his gallery, that their coaches became a nuisance; and the painter jestingly said to one of his brethren, "I must plant cannon at my door to keep the multitude off." This fever soon reached its cold fit. But a little while—and not a coroneted equipage was to be seen in his street; and Opie said to the same friend with sarcastic bitterness, "*They* have deserted my house as if it were infected with the plague." Sir Joshua, who knew the giddy nature of popular regard, and the hollowness of patronage, regarded all this bustle with calmness; nor was he at all annoyed when the young peasant was employed by the chief nobility

of England. He appreciated Opie's real talents, and, always willing to find a foreign forerunner for native genius, compared him to Carravaggio.

At the age of fifty-eight, and in the full enjoyment of health and vigour, Sir Joshua was attacked by a paralytic affection. His friends were more alarmed than himself, and Johnson, to whom at all times the idea of death was terrific, addressed him in a letter of solemn anxiety. "I heard yesterday," he says, "of your late disorder, and should think ill of myself if I heard it without alarm. I heard likewise of your recovery, which I wish to be complete and permanent. Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends; but I hope you will still live long for the honour of the nation; and that more enjoyment of your elegance, your intelligence, and your benevolence is still reserved for, dear sir, your most affectionate—SAM. JOHNSON."—Reynolds soon recovered from this attack.

A sense of the excellence of his works, or acquaintance with his bounty, obtained for him the praise of Wolcot, more widely known by the name of Peter Pindar. In the dearth of good poets and manly satirists this person rose into reputation. His works had a wide circulation; and he was dreaded by all who had a reputation which would pay for an attack. His commendation, however, was about as undesirable as his satire. In his eulogiums on Reynolds, he calls on Rubens and Titian to awake and see the new master, sailing in supreme dominion, like the eagle of Jove, above the heads of all other mortals. Those two great artists are in no haste to arise to behold the elevation of a maker of portraits, and are insulted by the poet and reproached with jealousy. Simple Portrait stands ready to be limned, and History sighs, anxious for his pencil. Such are the thoughts and many of the words in which Wolcot expressed his admiration of Reynolds. Nor was he much more successful when he condescended to treat of him in prose. "I lately breakfasted," he says,

"with Sir Joshua, at his house in Leicester Fields. After some desultory remarks on the old masters, but not one word of the living artists—as on that subject no one can ever obtain his real opinion—the conversation turned on Dr. Johnson. On my asking him how the club to which he belonged could so patiently suffer the tyranny of this overbearing man,—he replied, with a smile, that the members often hazarded sentiments merely to try his powers in contradiction. I think I in some measure wounded the feelings of Reynolds by observing that I had often thought that the Ramblers were Idlers, and the Idlers Ramblers, except those papers which he (Reynolds) had contributed; and, further, that Johnson too frequently acted the reverse of gipsies; 'the gipsies,' said I, 'when they steal the children of gentlefolks, conceal the theft by beggarly disguises; whereas Johnson often steals common thoughts, disguising the theft by a pomp of language.'"

Sir Joshua, supreme head as he was of the Academy, and unrivalled in fame and influence, was doomed to experience many crosses and vexations; but his sagacious spirit and tranquil temper brought him off triumphant. Barry, a man of great natural talents, and one who flew a flight even beyond Reynolds in his admiration of Michael Angelo, differed with him in everything else. Becoming Professor of Painting on the resignation of Mr. Penny, he had it in his power to annoy the Chair, and was not slow in perceiving his advantage. Reynolds, in the performance of his duty as President, could not fail to remark how very backward the Professor of Painting was in the performance of his undertaking — he had not delivered the stipulated lectures—and he inquired if they were composed. Barry, a little man and full of pride, rose on tip-toe—it is even said he clenched his fist to give stronger emphasis to his words—and exclaimed, "If I had only in composing my lectures to produce such poor mistaken stuff as your discourses, I should have my work done, and be ready to read." To reply suited neither the dignity nor the caution of Reynolds. The world praised him for his mildness and

moderation, and censured his fiery opponent, on whom they laid the whole blame of this indecent scene.

The reformation which the Emperor Joseph wrought among the monastic establishments brought before the public many of the productions of Rubens; and Reynolds, who seldom missed an opportunity of examining all paintings of eminence, went over to the Netherlands to see them. He remarked, on his return from his first tour, that his own works were deficient in force in comparison with those he had seen; and on his second tour, "He observed to me" (said Sir George Beaumont) "that the pictures of Rubens appeared much less brilliant than they had done on the former inspection. He could not for some time account for this circumstance; but when he recollected that when he first saw them he had his note-book in his hand, for the purpose of writing down short remarks, he perceived what had occasioned their now making a less impression than they had done formerly. By the eye passing immediately from the white paper to the picture, the colours derived uncommon richness and warmth: for want of this foil they afterwards appeared comparatively cold."

Mason, after having translated Du Fresnoy's "Art of Painting," laid it aside, and had nearly forgotten it, when it was brought into light and life by the inquiries and commendations and illustrative notes of Sir Joshua. He seems to have been desirous at all times of obtaining literary distinction for himself; or at least of obtaining the regard of literary men. It is true that some of his admirers claim the highest honours of literature for his "Discourses," which Malone, inspired by his friendship and his legacy, calls "The Golden Discourses." Others, like Wolcot, see an excellence in his casual essays which those of Johnson never attained; nor is Northcote willing to be behind, for, instead of Burke lending his aid to Reynolds in the composition of those far-famed "Discourses," he reverses the obligation, and insinuates that Burke had the help of Sir Joshua in writing his admirable admonition

to Barry. To claims such as these it would be unwise to listen. Johnson and Burke were of a higher order of intellect than Reynolds, and displayed a mastery in every subject with which they grappled. Such men were much more likely to impart than receive aid from him in literary compositions; and there is nothing in the letter of Burke which required minute information, or a mechanical acquaintance with the details of art. It discusses principles, not practice; and may justly claim the honour of being the most clear, sagacious, profound, and natural view of the true objects of painting which has ever been composed.

The notes which Reynolds added to Du Fresnoy may be dismissed in a few words. They are distinguished by their sagacity and knowledge—by their shrewd estimates of other men's merits, and by their modesty concerning his own. I have said that the President was frugal in his communications repecting the sources from whence he drew his own practice—he forgets his caution in one of these notes. He is speaking of the masters of the Venetian school, and says:—"When I was at Venice, the method I took to avail myself of their principles was this:—when I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject or the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind will be sufficient to give the method of their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike: their general practice appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights; another quarter to be kept as dark as possible; and the remaining half kept in mezzotint or half-shadow. Rubens appears to have admitted rather more light than a quarter, and Rembrandt much less, scarce an eighth: by this conduct Rembrandt's light is extremely brilliant—but it costs too much—the rest of the picture is

sacrificed to this one object. That light will certainly appear the brightest which is surrounded with the greatest quantity of shade, supposing equal skill in the artist."

Reynolds was commonly humane and tolerant—he could indeed afford, both in fame and in purse, to commend and aid the timid and the needy. When Gainsborough asked sixty guineas for his "Girl and Pigs," Sir Joshua gave him a hundred; and when another English artist of celebrity, on his arrival from Rome, asked him where he should set up a studio, he informed him that the next house to his own was vacant, and at his service. He could, however, be sharp and bitter on occasion. It is one of the penalties paid for eminence to be obliged, as a matter of courtesy, to give opinions upon the attempts of the dull. Sir Joshua had such visitations in abundance. One morning he became wearied in contemplating a succession of specimens submitted to his inspection, and, fixing his eye on a female portrait by a young and trembling practitioner, he roughly exclaimed: "What's this in your hand? A portrait! you should not show such things: what's that upon her head—a dish-clout?" The student retired in sorrow, and did not touch his pencils for a month.

Allan Ramsay, the king's painter, died in 1784, and was succeeded in his office by Reynolds—the emolument was little, nor was the honour important. Wilkes, in his sarcastic attack upon Hogarth, confounds the station with that of the house-painter; in short, the place, having been filled by several inferior artists, had sunk into discredit, like that of city poet. The exertions of Burke, in reforming the expenses of the royal household, had reduced the salary of the king's painter from two hundred pounds to fifty; and as Reynolds had no use for the money, and as the station could confer no new dignity upon him, he could have had no inducement to take it, save the desire of complying with the wishes of his benevolent sovereign.

He distinguished himself above all his brother artists in the year 1784 by his "Fortune-Teller," his portrait of Miss Kemble, and his Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse—

all very noble compositions. The latter conveys a strong image of the great actress, as, in the fulness of her beauty and her genius, she awed and astonished her audience, making Old Drury to show "a slope of wet faces from the pit to the roof."

Amidst the applause which these works obtained for him, the President met with a loss which the world could not repair—Samuel Johnson died on the 13th December 1784, full of years and honours. A long, warm, and beneficial friendship had subsisted between them. The house and the purse of Reynolds were ever open to Johnson, and the word and the pen of Johnson were equally ready for Reynolds. It was pleasing to contemplate this affectionate brotherhood, and it was sorrowful to see it dissevered. "I have three requests to make," said Johnson, a day before his death, "and I beg that you will attend to them, Sir Joshua. Forgive me thirty pounds which I borrowed from you—read the Scriptures—and abstain from using your pencil on the Sabbath-day." Reynolds promised, and—what is better—remembered his promise.

We owe the discovery of an original picture of Milton to the sagacity of Reynolds. It had belonged to Deborah, the poet's daughter—had passed into the family of Sir William Davenant—and was found in the possession of a furniture-broker by a dealer in pictures, who sold it to Sir Joshua for a hundred guineas. It was painted by Samuel Cooper, the friend and companion of Milton, in 1653. Doubts were raised, and suspicions expressed, concerning the descent of this portrait; and it must be confessed that all such discoveries deserve to be inquired into by men acquainted with the frauds practised in art. The professional experience of Sir Joshua was the best security against imposition. He was satisfied of its authenticity, and defended it successfully in the *Gentleman's Magazine.*

The works of Reynolds had long supplied daily food for those critics who swarm in the land—and scatter censure or praise at least as blindly as Fortune. He was now to be exposed to another of the same class, equally insidious

and subtle—and coming in a graver shape—a biographer. With so little skill, however, did this literary undertaker make his approaches, that he at first impressed the artist with a notion that his purpose was not to write his life but to take it. Now Sir Joshua had long indulged in the pleasing delusion, that Malone, or Boswell, or Beattie, or Burke, on all of whom he had showered favours, would perform in due time this friendly office. To them he had opened up all his knowledge, and for their use he had made memorandums concerning his practice, all calculated to direct the pen and shorten the labour of the biographer. But his chief dependence for his biography was on Burke, whose talents he rated even above those of Johnson, and whose services he sought to secure by a donation of four thousand pounds. The best laid schemes of mice and men, says the poetical moralist, are often frustrated, and so it happened here. Sir Joshua refused the humble in hopes of the high. When his pencil could no longer please, nor his pen sign away the thousands in his purse, he was neglected or forgotten by persons who had followed and flattered him.

Two pictures, differing much in character, yet of great merit, came from his pencil during the year 1785. One was "Love unloosing the Zone of Beauty"—a work which I cannot hope to describe in the language of discretion, and the other was the portrait of the Duke of Orleans —infamous under the name of Egalité—of whom I cannot write with temperance.

During the following year he gave up his thoughts and time to a picture commissioned by Catharine of Russia, and after long choosing, selected a subject at once commonplace and obscure—"The Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents." He had imagined another and nobler composition—Elizabeth visiting the English Camp at Tilbury, when the Armada was on the sea; but he relinquished the idea, from a wish to paint something illustrative of the character and undertakings of the empress herself. Now, Catharine was a woman who loved nature, and had no taste

for allegorical subtleties; and it is probable that her Russian connoisseurs never imagined that her actions were shadowed forth in a chubby boy choking two snakes. She rewarded the President, however, with fifteen hundred guineas and a gold box, bearing her portrait, set in large diamonds. Beattie calls it an unpromising subject; Barry commends the light and shade; and Reynolds himself, on bidding it farewell, said, "There are ten pictures under it, some better, some worse." So many trials had he made—such had been his anxiety to produce a masterpiece. The same year he painted a more simple and more popular picture—a sleeping girl. So splendid were the colours in which this sleeping beauty was embodied, that they threw into shade all other works which were near it in the exhibition.

When Boydell, a name which all lovers of art have learned to reverence, projected an edition of Shakespeare, embellished with engravings from the ablest painters, he found Reynolds unexpectedly cold and backward. A sensible friend undertook the task of persuasion, and in the midst of his argument slipped a five hundred pound note into the artist's hand. This mode of reasoning was powerful; three pictures were promised, imagined, sketched, and painted. The first was "Puck, or Robin Goodfellow"—a singular and a happy production—the very image of that tricksy sprite—with a hand ready for pleasant mischief, and an eye shining with uncommitted roguery. This poetic picture is in a poet's keeping—that of Mr. Rogers.* The second was "Macbeth," with the witches and the caldron. The figure of the usurper is deficient in heroic dignity; but there is a supernatural splendour thrown over the hags which cannot be contemplated without awe. The vivid excellence of Shakespeare, however, prevails against the painter; the conception is below the execution. The third and last was the "Death of Cardinal Beaufort," a work which has received the highest praise and the deepest

* Now in the possession of Earl Fitzwilliam, who purchased it at Rogers's sale for 980 guineas.

censure. I cannot help regarding the conception as a failure. To augment the horrors of a guilty conscience, the artist has introduced a fiend, who posts himself at the dying man's head, and excites our disgust, and carries away our feelings from the departing sinner. Those who seek a justification of this in the poet will seek in vain; the lines quoted in its defence contain only a figure of speech; one of those bold figures in which the great dramatist loved to deal.

> "O thou eternal mover of the heavens,
> Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
> Oh, beat away the busy meddling fiend
> That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
> And from his bosom purge this black despair."

Those who are unconvinced by these words may look for the fiend of the artist in the dramatis personæ of the poet. Opie praises this hideous and shapeless supernumerary as "one of the most signal examples of invention in the artist." The artist received a thousand guineas for "Macbeth," and five hundred for "Cardinal Beaufort." He took commissions of this kind with reluctance; his imagination was not a teeming one; he had numerous trials to make; success was never certain; and when he had finished his work, he found that the dead were but indifferent patrons; he complained, in short, says Northcote, that those subjects "cost him too dear."

Of his portrait of Eliott, Lord Heathfield, Barry says, "His object appears to have been to obtain the vigour and solidity of Titian, and the bustle and spirit of Vandyke, without the excesses of either." It is a noble and heroic head. There is a calm, martial determination which corresponds with the rough aspect. He grasps the key of Gibraltar in his hand, and seems to say, amid the volleying smoke and fire, "This rock shall melt and run into the Mediterranean before I yield thee."

Reynolds once observed that it was impossible for two painters, in the same line of art, to live in friendship. This was probably uttered in a moment of peevishness,

when he had been thwarted by some brother of the calling, and was not intended for a deliberate opinion. It is, nevertheless, nearer the truth than the disciples of art are willing to admit. What is the secret history of the Royal Academy but a record of battles and bickerings, of petty disputes and trifling animosities? Hogarth lived before it was founded, an object of mingled envy and terror. Gainsborough disliked Reynolds—Reynolds had no good-will to Gainsborough—Wilson also shared in this unamiable feeling, and Barry was unwilling to forgive anyone who painted better than himself. These are masters and princes of the calling:—their open feuds and private warrings would fill a volume; the animosities of the lesser spirits are unworthy of notice.

Sir Joshua sat to Gainsborough for his portrait; before it was finished he was taken ill and went to Bath; of his recovery and return he gave intimation, but no notice was taken of it, and the picture was never finished. Some unnatural fit of good-will had brought them together:—on reflection they separated, and continued to speak of one another after their own natures; Gainsborough with open scorn, Reynolds with courteous, cautious insinuation. It is true, however, that they at length forgave each other—that Gainsborough on *his death-bed* made atonement for his opposition, and relinquished all dislike—and that of Gainsborough, after he was fairly in his grave, Reynolds spoke with truth and justice.

The President was persuaded about this time by Boswell to attend the execution of a robber at Newgate. The unfortunate sufferer had been a servant in the family of Thrale, had often stood behind Sir Joshua's back; and, on seeing him in the crowd, bowed to him with mournful civility. A hero dying in battle, or a saint in his bed, may be worthy of contemplation; but what a Reynolds could have looked for, except disgust and sickness of heart, in witnessing the mortal agony of a vulgar malefactor, I am at a loss to conceive. He was sharply admonished at the time in some of the journals.

Sir Joshua had now reached his sixty-sixth year; the boldness and happy freedom of his productions were undiminished; and the celerity of his execution, and the glowing richness of his colouring, were rather on the increase than the wane. His life had been uniformly virtuous and temperate; and his looks, notwithstanding the paralytic stroke he had lately received, promised health and long life. He was happy in his fame and fortune, and in the society of numerous and eminent friends; and he saw himself in his old age without a rival. His great prudence and fortunate control of temper had prevented him from giving serious offence to any individual; and the money he had amassed, and the style in which he lived, unencumbered with a family, created a respect for him amongst those who were incapable of understanding his merits. But the hour of sorrow was at hand. One day, in the month of July 1789, while finishing the portrait of the Marchioness of Hertford, he felt a sudden decay of sight in his left eye. He laid down the pencil; sat a little while in mute consideration, and never lifted it more. His sight gradually darkened, and within ten weeks of the first attack his left eye was wholly blind. He appeared cheerful, and endeavoured to persuade himself that he was resigned and happy. But he had been accustomed to the society of the titled and the beautiful—and from this he was now cut off; he knew the world well, and perceived that, as the pencil, which brought the children of vanity about him as with a charm, could no longer be used, the giddy tide of approbation would soon roll another way. His mental sufferings were visible to some of his friends, though he sought to conceal them with all his might. One read to him to charm away the time—another conversed with him—and the social circle, among whom he had so long presided, still assembled round the well-spread table. Ozias Humphreys came every morning and read a newspaper to him; his niece, afterwards Marchioness of Thomond, arrived from the country, and endeavoured to soothe and amuse him; and he tried to divert himself by changing the

position of his pictures, and by exhibiting them all in succession in his drawing-room, so that he at once pleased his friends and gratified himself.

But a man cannot always live in society, nor can society always spare time to amuse him; there are many hours of existence which he must gladden, as he can, for himself. Cowper took to the taming of hares; and Sir Joshua made a companion of a little bird, which was so tame and docile as to perch on his hand, and with this innocent favourite he was often found by his friends pacing around his room, and speaking to it as if it were a thing of sense and information. A summer morning and an open window were temptations which it could not resist; it flew away; and Reynolds roamed for hours about the square where he resided in hopes of reclaiming it.

His rest was invaded by other disturbers than blindness; the evil spirit of politics appeared in the Literary Club, and made discord amongst the brethren; and, what was worse, a fierce feud broke out between Sir Joshua and the Royal Academy. Reynolds wished, through the persuasion of the Earl of Aylesford, to obtain the chair of perspective for Bonomi, an Italian architect; but, as he did not belong to the Academy, it was necessary that he should be elected an associate, and then a member, before he could be proposed as professor. At the election for *associate* the numbers were equal for Bonomi and Gilpin; the President gave his casting vote for the former, and thus put him one step in the way towards the professor's chair. A member soon after died, and the architect was put in nomination along with Fuseli. Reynolds exerted all his influence to secure the election of the first as Royal Academician; he met with unexpected opposition. His zeal in behalf of Bonomi had been too apparent; he had pushed him by his influence faster forwards than some thought his talents entitled him to, and had transgressed a formal rule by producing some drawings made by the Italian. Fuseli was elected by a majority of two to one, and Sir Joshua quitted the chair deeply offended. Nor was this all; he

wrote a warm, indignant letter, resigning his station as President, and bidding a final farewell to the Academy; he thought a little—and burnt it—and then wrote a cold and courteous one to the same effect. The Academy were overwhelmed with consternation, and endeavoured to soothe his pride by submissions little short of prostration. Sir William Chambers was the bearer, too, of a royal wish, saying how happy his Majesty would be if Sir Joshua would continue President. Thus assailed, he relented, and resumed the seat which his good sense should have prevented him from vacating.

He resumed it, however, only to resign it, which he performed in kindness, not in anger, after an occupation of twenty-one years. During all that period he had continued absolute in the realms of art, and maintained the dignity of his profession both in the Academy and in society. He had encountered, indeed, the rough hostility of Barry, and the opposition of Gainsborough, but these were transient and ineffectual; and save these, and some uncivil bickerings respecting twopenny-halfpenny plans of economy, his reign had been one of prosperity and peace. The other thirty-nine members, indeed, seem to have regarded him with a degree of submission amounting to servile fear; and, generally speaking, in the little senate of the Academy he had all his time sat sole dictator.

The last time that Reynolds made his appearance in the Academy was in the year 1790: he addressed a speech to the students on the delivery of the medals, and concluded by expatiating upon the genius of his favourite master, in such words as a credulous Catholic may use in praise of a benevolent saint. "I feel," said he, "a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of Michael Angelo."

His last visit to the Academy seemed once on the point

of ending tragically. There were present, besides members and students, a number of persons of rank and importance. The multitude was large, the weight great, and, just as the President was commencing his discourse, a beam in the floor gave way with a loud crash. The audience rushed to the door, or to the sides of the room; lord tumbled over student, student over lord, and academicians over both. Sir Joshua sat silent and unmoved in his chair; and, as the floor only sank a little, it was soon supported—the company resumed their seats—and he recommenced his discourse, all with perfect composure. He afterwards remarked, that, if the floor had fallen, the whole company must have been killed, and the arts in Britain thrown two hundred years back in consequence. He considered art as an inheritance descending from father to son; he believed that each succeeding generation would grow wiser and better, and that future academicians had only to add the knowledge of the dead to the genius of the living, and rise higher and higher; painting history till it became divine, and portraits worthy of the gods. That this wild notion was fixed within him there can be no dispute. "So much will painting improve," said he, "that the best we can now achieve will appear like the work of children."

That examples of excellence in art might not be wanting, Sir Joshua offered to the Royal Academy his valuable collection of pictures by the great masters at a very low price, on the condition that they should purchase a good gallery for their reception. It was his fortune to meet with many mortifications towards the close of his career, and this was one: the Academy, with a parsimony which is left unexplained, declined the purchase. They could not want money—for the President knew their circumstances when he made his proposal. Amongst forty men some two or three sordid souls are sure to be mixed, whose chief delight is the accumulation of money; who damp a generous enthusiasm by their parsimonious calculations, and delight in tying up the public gains of an institution at a satisfactory per-centage. Disappointed in this, Sir Joshua

made an exhibition of them in the Haymarket, for the advantage of his faithful servant, Ralph Kirkley; but our painter's well-known love of gain excited public suspicion; he was considered by many as a partaker in the profits, and reproached by the application of two lines from "Hudibras"—

> "A squire he had whose name was Ralph,
> Who in the adventure went his half."

But he was soon to be removed from the ingratitude of friends and the malevolence of enemies. He had been on a visit to Mr. Burke, in Buckinghamshire. On his return, he alighted at the inn at Hayes, and walked five miles on the road, in company with Mr. Malone, without stopping, and without complaint. He had then, though sixty-eight years old, the looks of a man of fifty, and seemed, said Malone, as likely to live ten or fifteen years as any of his younger friends. Soon after his return home his spirits became much depressed; a tumour, which baffled the skill of the surgeons, began to gather over his left eye, and, feeling the oppression of infirmities, he at length resigned for ever the situation of President of the Royal Academy.

A concealed and fatal malady was invading the functions of life, and sapping his spirits. This was an enlargement of the liver, which expanded to twice its natural dimensions, defied human skill, and deprived him of all cheerfulness. His friends were ever with him, and sought to soothe him with hopes of recovery, and with visions of long life; but he felt, in the simple language of the old bard,

> "That death was with him dealing,"

refused to be comforted, and prepared for dissolution. "I have been fortunate," he said, "in long good health and constant success, and I ought not to complain. I know that all things on earth must have an end, and now I am come to mine." Sir Joshua expired, without any visible symptoms of pain, on the 23rd of February 1792, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

"His illness (says Burke) was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of anything irritable or querulous: agreeably to the placid and even tenour of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow."

He was interred in one of the crypts of St. Paul's Cathedral, and accompanied to the grave by many of the most illustrious men of the land—forty-two coaches conveyed the mourners, and forty-nine empty carriages of the nobility and gentry added their encumbrance to the procession. He lies by the side of Sir Christopher Wren, architect of the edifice; and a statue to his memory by Flaxman has since been placed in the body of the cathedral.

In stature Sir Joshua Reynolds was somewhat below the middle size; his complexion was florid, his features blunt and round, his aspect lively and intelligent, and his manners calm, simple, and unassuming. He was an early mover—a man whom application could not tire, nor constant labour subdue. In his economy he was close and saving; while he poured out his wines, and spread out his tables to the titled or the learned, he stinted his domestics to the commonest fare, and rewarded their faithfulness by very moderate wages. One of his servants, who survived till lately, described him as a master who exacted obedience in trifles—was prudent in the matter of pins—a saver of bits of thread—a man hard and parsimonious, who never thought he had enough of labour out of his dependants, and always suspected that he overpaid them. To this may be added the public opinion, which pictured him close, cold, cautious, and sordid; and, on the other side, we have the open testimony of Burke, Malone, Boswell, and Johnson, who all represent him as generous, open-hearted, and humane. The servants and the friends both spoke, I doubt not, according to their own experience of the man. Privations

in early life rendered strict economy necessary; and, in spite of many acts of kindness, his mind on the whole failed to expand with his fortune; he continued the same system of saving when he was master of sixty thousand pounds as when he owned but sixpence. He loved reputation dearly, and it would have been well for his fame, if, over and above leaving legacies to such friends as Burke and Malone, he had opened his heart to humbler people. A little would have gone a long way—a kindly word and a guinea prudently given!

Sir Joshua has a threefold claim upon posterity—for his Discourses, his historical and poetical paintings, and his portraits. Of all these I have already spoken at some length. The Discourses were delivered when the annual distribution of medals took place among the most promising students of the Royal Academy. Their object was to impress upon the minds of his audience a sense of the dignity, and a knowledge of the character and importance of art—to stimulate them to study and labour—to point out the way to excellence; unfold the principles of composition, and disclose the charms of beauty and the whole mystery of colour. He required lively diligence, continued study, and unlimited belief in the excellence of the chief masters of the calling—in reward for which he promised distinction and fame. But fame could be acquired only by study, hard, and, above all, well-directed—rules were the ornaments, not the fetters of genius, and hard labour was the way to eminence, and the only way. The great painters, when they conceived a subject, first made a variety of sketches, then a finished drawing of the whole—after that a more correct drawing of every separate part—then they painted the picture, and finally retouched it from the life. The pictures, thus wrought with such pains, appeared to be the effect of enchantment, and as if some mighty genius had struck them off at a blow.—Those Discourses were always heard with respect; and as the subject was new, the compositions full of knowledge, and the illustrations numerous and happy, they obtained the

approbation of skilful judges, and rose to such reputation, that they were attributed at one time to Johnson, and at another to Burke.

They are distinguished by many beauties, and deformed by one serious fault—they correspond not with the character of English art, and the determined taste of this country. "Study," exclaimed Reynolds to his students (and I could quote fifty pages to the same purpose), "study the great works of the great masters for ever. Study as nearly as you can in the order, in the manner, on the principles on which they studied. Study nature attentively, but always with those masters in your company: consider them as models which you are to imitate, and at the same time as rivals which you are to combat." Such was his theory: we all know what was his practice. He could not be unaware, while he was lecturing the annual academical crop of beardless youths upon the necessity of studying in the character, and labouring in the style, of the princes of the Italian school, that he was sending them forth to seek bread and fame in a pursuit where neither was to be found; while he was shutting his lips, and keeping silence concerning the domestic style and the mystery of portraiture, in which he himself was unequalled.

It was, I apprehend too, the province of the President to point out those natural qualities by which genius for art might be distinguished from forwardness and presumption, and young men might see whether they were led by the false light of vanity or by light from heaven. Every dunce can labour; but stupidity must toil like Caliban, while genius works its ready wonders like the wand of Prospero. It was not enough that he called the students before him, and set them their stated tasks of smoothing clay or of colouring canvas: he ought to have admonished, nay, commanded the dull and unintellectual to retire from a pursuit for which they were unfit. All men, indeed, are capable of being artists in a certain degree, as all men may be versifiers; but a decent drawing is no

more a proof of genius in art, than a few smooth and sounding lines are a proof of the spirit of poetry. The youth who is to be encouraged in the pursuit of poetry should show glimpses of original power of thought and ready happiness of language; and a student in art should display some production of original and unborrowed talent before admission to the Academy. A good eye, a steady hand, and a little practice, may enable any young man to make such a copy of an antique figure as will give him admission, without genius to rise one step higher.

Sir Joshua's historical paintings have little of the heroic dignity which an inspired mind breathes into compositions of that class. His imagination commonly fails him, and he attempts to hide his want of wings in the unrivalled splendour of his colouring, and by the thick-strewn graces of his execution. He is often defective even where he might have expected to show the highest excellence: his faces are formal and cold; and the picture seems made up of borrowed fragments, which he had been unable to work up into an entire and consistent whole.

His single poetic figures are remarkable for their unaffected ease, their elegant simplicity, and the splendour of their colouring. Some scores of those happy things he dashed off in the course of his life; and though they are chiefly portraits, they have all the charm of the most successful aërial creations. The "Shepherd Boy" is one of his happiest. Of children he seems to have been remarkably fond; nor can one forbear imagining that he has romped or ridden with them on the parlour broom, sorrowed with them over the loss of their favourite birds, smiled with them on their being endowed with new finery, and enjoyed all the mixed surprise and triumph expressed in the face of Muscipula on catching a mouse in a trap. It is true that they are all children of condition, with their nurses wet and dry—that their clothes are of the finest texture and the latest fashion—and that we are conscious of looking at future lords and ladies. But nature overpowers all minor feelings, and we cannot refrain from doing

involuntary homage to the genius of the painter who has gladdened us with the sight of so much innocence and beauty.

To some of his poetic figures I cannot afford such praise, though the grace of their composition and the singular sweetness of their looks raise them far above censure. By what he considered a classical refinement upon his professional flattery of improved looks and glowing colours, he suffered some of the fairest of his sitters to be goddesses and nymphs, and painted them in character. This was the commonplace pedantry of painting; it had been the fashion for centuries. Lely and Kneller caused the giddy madams of the courts of the Stuarts to stalk like Minervas or Junos, though they had naturally the dispositions of Venus or of Danaë; and Reynolds, who had equal loveliness and infinitely more purity to portray, indulged his beauties with the same kind of deification. In truth, it is only worthy of a smile.

The portraits of Reynolds are equally numerous and excellent, and all who have written of their merits have swelled their eulogiums by comparing them with the simplicity of Titian, the vigour of Rembrandt, and the elegance and delicacy of Vandyke. Certainly, in character and expression, and in manly ease, he has never been surpassed. He is always equal—always natural—graceful —unaffected. His boldness of posture and his singular freedom of colouring are so supported by all the grace of art—by all the sorcery of skill—that they appear natural and noble. Over the meanest head he sheds the halo of dignity; his men are all nobleness, his women all loveliness, and his children all simplicity: yet they are all like the living originals. He had the singular art of summoning the mind into the face, and making sentiment mingle in the portrait. He could completely dismiss all his preconceived notions of academic beauty from his mind, be dead to the past and living only to the present, and enter into the character of the reigning beauty of the hour with a truth and a happiness next to magical. It is not to be denied

that he was a mighty flatterer. Had Colonel Charteris sat to Reynolds, he would, I doubt not, have given an aspect worthy of a President of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

That the admirers of portrait-painting are many, the annual exhibitions show us; and it is pleasant to read the social and domestic affections of the country in these innumerable productions. In the minds of some they rank with historical compositions; and there can be no doubt that portraits which give the form and the soul of poets, and statesmen, and warriors, and of all whose actions or whose thoughts lend lustre to the land, are to be received as illustrations of history. But with the mob of portraits fame and history have nothing to do. The painter who wishes for lasting fame must not lavish his fine colours and his choice postures on the rich and the titled alone; he must seek to associate his labours with the genius of his country. The face of an undistinguished person, however exquisitely painted, is disregarded in the eyes of posterity. The most skilful posture and the richest colouring cannot create the reputation which accompanies genius, and we turn coldly away from the head which we happen not to know or to have heard of. The portrait of Johnson has risen to the value of five hundred guineas: while the heads of many of Sir Joshua's grandest lords remain at their original fifty.

The influence of Reynolds on the taste and elegance of the island was great, and will be lasting. The grace and ease of his compositions were a lesson for the living to study, while the simplicity of his dresses admonished the giddy and the gay against the hideousness of fashion. He sought to restore nature in the looks of his sitters, and he waged a thirty years' war against the fopperies of dress. His works diffused a love of elegance, and united with poetry in softening the asperities of nature, in extending our views, and in connecting us with the spirits of the time. His cold stateliness of character, and his honourable pride of art, gave dignity to his profession: the rich and the

far-descended were pleased to be painted by a gentleman as well as a genius.

Of historical and poetic subjects he painted upwards of one hundred and thirty. They are chiefly in England, and in the galleries or chambers of the titled and the opulent. The names of a few of the most famous may interest the reader:—"Macbeth and the Witches;" "Cardinal Beaufort;" "Holy Family;" "Hercules strangling the Serpents;" "The Nativity;" "Count Ugolino;" "Cymon and Iphigenia;" "The Fortune-Teller;" "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy;" "The Snake in the Grass;" "The Blackguard Mercury;" "Muscipula;" "Puck;" "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse;" "The Shepherd Boy;" "Venus chiding Cupid for casting accounts."

Of men he painted the portraits of some four-and-twenty, whose names still occupy their station in fame or history; and of ladies he painted many remarkable for accomplishments, mental and personal. Among the former are Percy, Bishop of Dromore; Edmund Burke; Colonel Tarleton; Dr. Charles Burney; Dr. Hawkesworth; Dr. Robertson; Joseph Warton; the Earl of Mansfield; Edward Gibbon; Oliver Goldsmith; Samuel Johnson; Warren Hastings; Lord Anson; Lord Heathfield; Lord Ligonier; Lord Rodney; Lord Thurlow; Lord Granby; Thomas Warton; Adam Fergusson; Sir Joseph Banks; Sir William Chambers; Laurence Sterne; Dr. Beattie; Viscount Keppel; Horace Walpole; and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Let me conclude with the words of Burke; they are a little loftier than necessary, and somewhat warmer. The eulogy from which they are taken appeared in the newspapers the day after Sir Joshua's death, and produced a very great sensation; but much less cannot be said when a colder tale comes to be told.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste—in grace—in facility—in happy invention—and in the richness and

harmony of colouring, he was equal to the greatest masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that description of the art, in which English artists are most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity, derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention and the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits he appeared not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend upon it from a higher sphere.

"In full affluence of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him even on surprise or provocation: nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinising eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind, powerful by nature and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations and all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to excite some jealousy—too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow. Hail! and Farewell."

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

Two eminent men, Wilson and Gainsborough, laid the foundation of our school of landscape; their works are full of the truest nature and the purest fancy, and their fame is now properly felt; yet of their personal history little is known save what the suspicious testimony of avowed enemies and careless friends—and the random notice of some periodical writers—may add to the vague stream of tradition.

Thomas Gainsborough, the fourth eminent name in British art, was born in the year 1727, at Sudbury, in Suffolk—the day or the month no one has mentioned. Of his father, whose name was John, by trade a clothier, and in religion a dissenter, I can only say with common belief that he was a stately and personable man, with something mysterious in his history, for the pastoral and timid rustics of Suffolk suspected him of carrying a dagger and pistols under his clothes. Of his mother, whose maiden name I have not learned, the same authority says that she was kind and indulgent to her children, and, moreover, somewhat proud of her sons, of whom she had three, all distinguished above their companions for talents and attainments. The family was of old standing, well to live, and of unblemished respectability.

Respecting Thomas, the youngest son, memory is still strong in Suffolk. Near Sudbury a beautiful wood of four miles' extent is shown, whose ancient trees, winding glades, and sunny nooks inspired him, while he was but a schoolboy, with the love of art. Scenes are pointed out where he

used to sit and fill his copy-books with pencillings of flowers, and trees, and whatever pleased his fancy; and it is said that those early attempts of the child bore a distinct resemblance to the mature works of the man. At ten years old he had made some progress in sketching, and at twelve he was a confirmed painter. Good scholarship was, under such circumstances, out of the question; yet his letters which I have seen show no want in the art of expressing clear thoughts in clear words. His knowledge was obtained from his intercourse with mankind, and by his spirit of ready observation he supplied the deficiencies of education.

The sketches which he made were concealed for a time; the secret, however, could no longer be kept. One day he had ventured to request a holiday, which was refused, and the audacious boy imposed his own penmanship on the master for the usual written request of his father, of "Give Tom a holiday." The trick was found out; his father looked upon the simulated paper with fear, and muttered, "The boy will come to be hanged!" but when he was informed that those stolen hours were bestowed upon the pencil, and some of Tom's sketches were shown to him, his brow cleared up, and he exclaimed, "The boy will be a genius!" Other stories of his early works are not wanting. On one occasion he was concealed among some bushes in his father's garden, making a sketch of an old fantastic tree, when he observed a man looking most wistfully over the wall at some pears, which were hanging ripe and tempting. The slanting light of the sun happened to throw the eager face into a highly picturesque mixture of light and shade, and Tom immediately sketched his likeness, much to the poor man's consternation afterwards, and much to the amusement of his father, when he taxed the peasant with the intention of plundering his garden, and showed him how he looked. Gainsborough long afterwards made a finished painting of this Sudbury rustic—a work much admired amongst artists—under the name of Tom Peartree's portrait. He loved to show his powers in such hasty

things; and, from the unembarrassed freedom of mind and hand with which he produced them, they take rank with his happiest compositions.

Of his early sketches made in the woods of Sudbury few, I apprehend, now exist, though they were once numerous. No fine clump of trees, no picturesque stream, nor romantic glade—no cattle grazing, nor flocks reposing, nor peasants pursuing their rural or pastoral occupations—escaped his diligent pencil. Those hasty sketches were all treasured up as materials to be used when his hand should have become skilful; he showed them to his visitors, and called them his riding-school. As his reputation rose he became less satisfied with these early proofs of talent, and scattered them with a profuse hand amongst friends and visitors. To one lady he made a present of twenty; but so injudiciously were these precious things bestowed, that the lady pasted them round the walls of her apartment, and, as she soon left London, they became the property of the next inhabitant. His *first* drawing was a clump of trees; he long retained it, and one of his biographers says it was a "wonderful thing."

Talents so vigorous were acknowledged even in the seclusion of a country-place; and his father was very willingly persuaded to send the youth, to prosecute his labours with the benefit of example and instruction, to London. No one has made him older than fourteen when he left Sudbury for the metropolis, and all agree that he studied under Hayman, one of the companions of Hogarth. Grignon, the engraver, who knew him well, informed Edwards, author of the "Anecdotes of Painters," that Gainsborough received the *first* rudiments of his art from Gravelot. His genius, his history, his modest deportment, and his good looks, obtained him many friends; but he had not then formed any high notion of his own powers: he, at the most, considered himself as one whose skill might gain him a comfortable livelihood in a provincial town. He saw that historical painting was an unprofitable, and he felt it to be an uncongenial pursuit; no landscapes worthy

of art had yet made their appearance, for Wilson was seeking bread in portraiture; he could not fail to see that his own works were essentially different from those which filled the easels of the artists in St. Martin's Lane—and mistrusted his success accordingly. He remained in London four years; and having acquired skill, and mastered some of the mystic tricks of colour and composition, he returned to his father's house a confirmed painter.

He was now in his eighteenth year, and the reputation of his talents, the modest gaiety of his conversation, and the extreme elegance of his person, rendered his company universally acceptable in his native place. He could not, indeed, learn modesty under Hayman; but he acquired the art of making use of his wit and his information with a graceful readiness, and his handsome form, and looks beaming with intelligence and genius, could not fail of doing him a good turn if he conducted himself wisely. It happened, in one of his pictorial excursions amongst the woods of Suffolk, that he sat down to make a sketch of some fine trees, with sheep reposing below, and wood-doves roosting above, when a young woman entered unexpectedly upon the scene, and was at once admitted into the landscape and the feelings of the artist. The name of this young lady was Margaret Burr; she was of Scottish extraction, and in her sixteenth year, and to the charms of good sense and good looks was added a clear annuity of two hundred pounds. These are matters which no writer of romance would overlook; and were accordingly felt by a young, an ardent, and susceptible man; nor must I omit to tell that country rumour conferred other attractions—she was said to be the natural daughter of one of our exiled princes; nor was she, when a wife and a mother, desirous of having this circumstance forgotten. On an occasion of household festivity, when her husband was high in fame, she vindicated some little ostentation in her dress by whispering to her niece, "I have some right to this—for you know, my love, I am a prince's daughter." Prince's daughter or not, she was wooed and won by Gainsborough, and made him a

kind, a prudent, and a submissive wife. The courtship was short. The young pair left Sudbury, leased a small house at a rent of six pounds a-year in Ipswich, and making themselves happy in mutual love, conceived they were settled for life.

In Ipswich it was his destiny to become acquainted with Philip Thicknesse, governor of Landguard Fort—a gentleman who befriended him at first and maligned him afterwards. This person instantly threw the mantle of his patronage over him. It is not unusual to see a friend of this fashion marching triumphantly before genius as it is struggling into distinction, and imagining all the while that from his notice the other's reputation arises. Gainsborough was as yet little known, and had few friends; his excellency lived in a lonely place, and was desirous of having his solitude enlivened by a visitor whose wit was abundant and his pencil ready. While the artist continued humble the patron was kind: but as he began to assert his own independence, the esteem of the other subsided, and the vain friend became the avowed enemy. Had this been all, it might have been regretted less; but, so soon as the artist died, Thicknesse, under pretence of writing a sketch of his life, produced an unworthy pamphlet, which misrepresented him as a man while it praised him as a painter. It is indeed unsafe to follow it for a single page; but as honey is found in the basest weed, so may truth be extracted from this malignant narrative. I shall only adopt such anecdotes as are corroborated by internal evidence, and have been confirmed or corrected by the living representatives of the house of Gainsborough.

The first meeting of the artist and the governor was in character. The latter, whilst taking a walk in a friend's garden, saw a melancholy face looking over the wall. As the stranger remained long in the same position, he advanced to accost him, when he perceived it to be a piece of wood shaped and painted like a man, and stationed as a sentinel in the adjoining garden of Gainsborough. This species of joke corresponded with the taste of the governor

—he waited on the artist, and upbraided him with having imposed a shadow upon him for a substance. The compliment was not ill received, and he was shown into the painting-room, where he found many portraits which he thought but indifferently executed, and more landscapes, which he at once pronounced to be works of spirit and fancy. Amongst the former was the head of Admiral Vernon, and the portrait of the identical Tom Peartree, who longed for the ripe pears in Sudbury garden.

Of his productions in those early days Thicknesse is the only man who speaks, and I must use his words. "Madam Nature, not man, was then his only study, and he seemed intimately acquainted with that beautiful lady." So far well.—"I was the first man," continues the governor, "who perceived, through clouds of bad colouring, what an accurate eye he possessed, and the truth of his drawings, and who dragged him from the obscurity of a country-town, at a time when all his neighbours were as ignorant of his great talents as he was himself." This is the modesty of patronage! Gainsborough had shown a strong consciousness of talents, for he depended upon them for bread before he was eighteen years old; and some of his neighbours had appreciated his genius, since they had counselled his removal to the academies of London.

The governor gave him a commission to paint Landguard Fort, including the neighbouring hills, and the port of Harwich, price thirty guineas, and, to sum up all, he lent him a fiddle; on which he erelong made such proficiency, that the governor, though a skilful musician himself, declares he would as soon have tried to paint against him as fiddle against him. An engraving by Major of the picture of Landguard Fort spread abroad the name of Gainsborough; the vanity of Thicknesse, and the desire which the artist had of distinction, were gratified, and they appear to have lived in great amity through the united influence of painting and fiddling. Of the original painting of the Fort nothing now remains; it was hung on a wall built with mortar mixed with sea-water, and so perished.

The increasing fame of Gainsborough demanded a wider field; he had exhausted the faces and the scenery of Ipswich, and the counsel of Thicknesse agreeing with his own wishes, removed to Bath in the year 1758, and took lodgings in the Circus, at the rate of fifty pounds annually. He was now in the thirty-first year of his age, and his fame was in some degree established—yet so small, in spite of the boasted patronage of the governor, had his success been, that his wife, come of a prudent nation, if not of a prudent family, was alarmed, remonstrated against this increase of expenditure, and was with some difficulty appeased.

It formed part of the plan of the governor, who conceived himself to be very popular in Bath, that his portrait, painted on purpose, "should serve as a decoy duck for customers." The artist himself, however, seems to have given less enthusiasm to this project than his friend. He had begun to grow weary of offering up continual incense to this vain deity; and to wish to be relieved from this overwhelming patronage of one who claimed the fame arising from his works, and the privilege of directing his studies. From some hints which his excellency throws out, I apprehend that he attributed this independent movement to the influence of Mrs. Gainsborough. But the artist must, I believe, have the whole honour of this to himself. Thicknesse seems never to have suspected that, though Gainsborough was a pleasant companion, and one who indulged in sallies of merriment and humour, he concealed, under all this, a variable temper, and a spirit shy, proud, intrepid, and intractable. His wife, whatever the governor has insinuated to the contrary, was a remarkably mild and sweet-tempered woman—I repeat the words of Mrs. Lane—who gave her husband his own way, and never sought to win him to her wishes but by gentleness. Indeed, he was one of the last that would have brooked control; and so proud, or so whimsical, that he never rode up to his own door in a hackney-coach, and admonished his niece to avoid doing so if she loved him.

Those who knew both Thicknesse and Gainsborough were only surprised that they continued friends so long. The tide was now on the turn; the portrait proposed by the governor as a profitable decoy was left untouched; the heads of men of inferior mark were limned off by the dozen, and landscapes, which contained other beauties than those of Landguard Fort, were painted; the patron lost patience and remonstrated; the pride of the painter was hurt, and he forthwith resolved to free himself from the encumbrance of a sort of patronising nightmare, who, under pretence of caressing, seemed disposed to suffocate him. The dissolution of their friendship, however, was the work of years.

In the meanwhile, Gainsborough gave all his time to portrait, to landscape, and to music. Portrait-painting, like the poet with the two mistresses, had his visits, but landscape and music had his heart. His price for a head rose from five guineas to eight, and as his fame increased, the charge augmented till he had forty guineas for a half, and a hundred for a whole length. Riches now flowed in, for his hand was ready and diligent; his wife was relieved from her fears in the matter of money; and he was enabled to indulge himself after his own fashion. Books he admired little: in one of his letters he says that he was well read in the volume of nature, and that was learning sufficient for him; the intercourse of literary men he avoided as carefully as Reynolds courted it: but he was fond of company, and passionately so of music. He considered a good musician as one of the first of men, and a good instrument as one of the noblest works of human skill. All the hours of intermission in his profession he gave to fiddles and rebecs. To this period the following characteristic story has been ascribed, and though strange, it seems true:—

"Gainsborough's profession," says his friend Jackson, "was painting, and music was his amusement; yet there were times when music seemed to be his employment and painting his diversion. As his skill in music has been

celebrated, I shall mention what degree of merit he possessed as a musician. He happened on a time to see a theorbo in a picture of Vandyke's, and concluded, because perhaps it was finely painted, that the theorbo must be a fine instrument. He recollected to have heard of a German professor, and ascending to his garret found him dining on roasted apples, and smoking his pipe, with his theorbo beside him. 'I am come to buy your lute—name your price, and here's your money.' 'I cannot sell my lute.' 'No, not for a guinea or two—but you must sell it, I tell you.' 'My lute is worth much money—it is worth ten guineas.' 'Ay! that it is—see, here's the money.' So saying, he took up the instrument, laid down the price, went half-way down the stair, and returned. 'I have done but half my errand; what is your lute worth if I have not your book?' 'What book, Master Gainsborough?' 'Why, the book of airs you have composed for the lute.' 'Ah, sir, I can never part with my book!' 'Poh! you can make another at any time—this is the book I mean—there's ten guineas for it—so once more good day.' He went down a few steps, and returned again. 'What use is your book to me if I don't understand it? and your lute, you may take it again if you won't teach me to play on it. Come home with me, and give me the first lesson.' 'I will come to-morrow.' 'You must come now.' 'I must dress myself.' 'For what? You are the best figure I have seen to-day.' 'I must shave, sir.' 'I honour your beard!' 'I must, however, put on my wig.' 'Damn your wig! your cap and beard become you! Do you think if Vandyke was to paint you, he'd let you be shaved?' In this manner he frittered away his musical talents, and though possessed of ear, taste, and genius, he never had application enough to learn his notes. He seemed to take the first step, the second was of course out of his reach, and the summit became unattainable."

He was so passionately attached to music that he filled his house with all manner of instruments, and allowed his table to be infested with all sorts of professors save

bagpipers. He loved Giardini and his violin—he admired Abel and his viol-di-gamba—he patronised Fischer and his hautboy—and was in raptures with a strolling harper, who descended from the Welsh mountains into Bath. When he dined, he talked of music; when he painted, he discoursed with his visitors and sitters on its merits; and when he had leisure, he practised by fits and starts on his numerous instruments, and, notwithstanding Jackson's opinion, his performance was worthy of praise.

One of his acquaintances in Bath was Wiltshere, the public carrier, a kind and worthy man, who loved Gainsborough, and admired his works. In one of his landscapes he wished to introduce a horse, and as the carrier had a very handsome one, he requested the loan of it for a day or two, and named his purpose; his generous neighbour bridled it and saddled it, and sent it as a present. The painter was not a man to be outdone in acts of generosity; he painted the waggon and horses of his friend, put his whole family and himself into it, and sent it well framed to Wiltshere, with his kind respects. It is considered a very capital performance. From 1761, when Gainsborough began to exhibit his paintings at the Academy, till his removal from Bath in 1774, Wiltshere was annually employed to carry his pictures to and from London; he took great care of them, and constantly refused to accept money, saying, "No—no—I admire painting too much," and plunged his hands in his pockets to secure them against the temptation of the offered payment. Perceiving, however, that this was not acceptable to the proud artist, the honest carrier hit upon a scheme which pleased both. "When you think," said he, "that I have *carried* to the value of a little painting, I beg you will let me have one, sir; and I shall be more than paid." In this coin the painter paid Wiltshere, and overpaid him. His son is still in possession of several of these pictures, and appreciates their value; many of Gainsborough's productions were not so worthily disposed of.

Of his works during his residence at Bath I am not enabled to give any particular account. They were no

doubt numerous, since he could live in the style of a gentleman, and entertain company. His brothers were made sensible of his change of fortune, and it must be related to his honour that all his kindred and connections speak of him as a kind and generous man, who anticipated wants, and bore his fortunes meekly. Nor was the governor of Landguard Fort himself without a small share in these showers of good fortune. The artist appears to have discovered that money would not be unwelcome in the household of his friend, and to have taken a singular and delicate mode of lending his assistance. I must first, however, relate this story as Thicknesse himself has told it.

Among the instruments of music which Gainsborough loved, I have named the viol-di-gamba, and Mrs. Thicknesse had one, made in the year 1612, on which she played with much skill and effect. He appeared one evening to be exceedingly charmed with the instrument, and said, "I love it so much that I will willingly give a hundred guineas for it." She desired him to stay to supper; she placed the viol-di-gamba beside him, he took it up and played in a manner so masterly, that Mrs. Thicknesse said, "You deserve an instrument on which you play so well; and I beg your acceptance of it, on the condition that you will give me my husband's picture to hang beside the one which you painted of me." The artist acquiesced; the viol-di-gamba was sent to him next morning; he stretched a canvas, took one sitting of some fifteen minutes' duration, and then laid it aside for other works. The lady was incensed, and the husband remonstrated; Gainsborough returned the viol-di-gamba, and never touched the picture more.

Such is the story of Thicknesse: the family version, communicated to me by a lady who had it from Mrs. Gainsborough herself, is somewhat different. The painter (according to this account) put a hundred guineas privately into the hands of Mrs. Thicknesse for the viol-di-gamba; her husband, who might not be aware of what passed, renewed his wish for his portrait; and obtained what he

conceived to be a promise that it should be painted. This double benefaction was, however, more than Gainsborough had contemplated: he commenced the portrait, but there it stopped; and after a time, resenting some injurious expressions from the lips of the governor, the artist sent him the picture, rough and unfinished as it was, and returned also the viol-di-gamba.

"This," said Thicknesse, "was a deadly blow to me; but I knew, though it seemed his act, it did not originate with him: he had been told that I said openly in the public coffee-house at Bath, that when I first knew him at Ipswich his children were running about the streets there without shoes or stockings; but the rascal who told him so was the villain who robbed the poor from the plate he held at the church door for alms." Such words as these were likely to sink deep into the proud heart of Gainsborough; and though Thicknesse denied them—as well he might, for they were untrue—they aided him in the resolution which he probably had long formed of making his escape from such crushing patronage and ungentle company. Even this necessary step was precipitated by Thicknesse himself. He sent back his portrait with a note requesting him to take his brush and first rub out the countenance of the truest and warmest friend he ever had; and having so done, then blot him for ever from his memory.

Gainsborough now removed to London, took a house in Pall-Mall, which was built by Duke Schomberg, and removing all his paintings and drawings, and flutes and fiddles, bade farewell to Bath for ever.

Even to London the harassing protection of Thicknesse pursued him. "I was much alarmed," said that most prudent of patrons, "lest, with all his merit and genius, he might be in London a long time before he was properly known to that class of people who alone could *essentially* serve him; for of all the men I ever knew, he possessed least of that worldly knowledge to enable him to make his own way into the notice of the *great world*. I therefore wrote to Lord Bateman, who knew him, and who admired

his talents, stating the above particulars, and urging him at the same time, for both our sakes, to give him countenance and make him known. His lordship, for me or for both our sakes, did so; and his remove from Bath to London proved as good a move as it was from Ipswich to Bath." The matchless vanity of this man made him believe not only that he was the sole cause of our painter's success in Bath, but that from his intercession with Lord Bateman sprung all the subsequent good fortune in London of the man who had already painted many noble productions, and who had exhibited them for thirteen years in succession in the Royal Academy.

He was now freed from this incumbrance, and continued his career in portraiture and landscape with fresh feeling and increasing success. His house was ample, his gallery was fit for the reception of the first in rank, and as the fame of the heads of Lord Kilmorrey, Mr. Quin, Mr. Medlicote, Mr. Mosey, Dr. Charlton, Mr. Fischer, and Mrs. Thicknesse had gone before him, he soon found good employment. Sir Joshua Reynolds was then in high favour; but even the rapid execution of the president could not satisfy the whole demand; and there was room for another, who, to just delineation of character, added a force and a freedom which approached and sometimes rivalled Vandyke. A conversation or family piece of the king, the queen, and the three royal sisters, was much admired; indeed, the permanent splendour of his colours, and the natural and living air which he communicated to whatever he touched, made him already, in the estimation of many, a rival, and a dangerous one, of the president himself.

Amongst those who sat to him was the Duchess of Devonshire—then in the bloom of youth, at once the loveliest of the lovely and the gayest of the gay. But her dazzling beauty, and the sense which he entertained of the charms of her looks, and her conversation, took away that readiness of hand and hasty happiness of touch which belonged to him in his ordinary moments. The portrait

was so little to his satisfaction, that he refused to send it to Chatsworth. Drawing his wet pencil across a mouth which all who saw it thought exquisitely lovely, he said, "Her Grace is too hard for me." The picture was, I believe, destroyed. Amongst his papers were found two sketches of the duchess—both exquisitely graceful.

He had customers who annoyed him with other difficulties than those of too radiant loveliness. A certain lord, whom one of our biographers, out of compassion for rank, calls an *alderman*, came for his portrait; and that all might be worthy of his station, he had put on a new suit of clothes, richly-laced, with a well-powdered wig. Down he sat, and put on a practised look of such importance and prettiness, that the artist, who was no flatterer either with tongue or pencil, began to laugh, and was heard to mutter, "This will never do!" The patient having composed himself in conformity with his station, said, "Now, sir, I beg you will not overlook the dimple on my chin!" "Confound the dimple on your chin!" said Gainsborough—"I shall neither paint the one nor the other." And he laid down his brushes, and refused to resume them. Garrick, too, and Foote also came for their likenesses; he tried again and again, without success, and dismissed them in despair. "Rot them for a couple of rogues," he exclaimed, "they have everybody's faces but their own!" As the reader has already seen, David Garrick had the address to gratify Reynolds with a ludicrous account of this failure.

With others he was more fortunate. But, excellent as many of his portraits are, it was a desire to excel in many things which drew him from his favourite study of free and unsophisticated nature. There he surpassed all living men; in portrait, he was more than equalled by Reynolds. "Nature," says Thicknesse, in one of those moments when love of his early friend prevailed against hatred—"Nature sat to him in all her attractive attitudes of beauty; and his pencil traced, with peculiar and matchless facility, her finest and most delicate lineaments; whether it was the sturdy oak, the twisted eglantine, the mower whetting his scythe,

the whistling ploughboy, or the shepherd under the hawthorn in the dale—all came forth equally chaste from his inimitable and fanciful pencil."

Though Gainsborough was not partial to the society of literary men, he seems to have been acquainted with Johnson and with Burke; and he lived on terms of great affection with Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He was also a welcome visitor at the table of Sir George Beaumont, a gentleman of graceful manners, who lived in old English dignity, and was, besides, a lover of literature and a painter of landscape. The latter loved to relate a curious anecdote of Gainsborough, which marks the unequal spirits of the man, and shows that he was the slave of wayward impulses which he could neither repress nor command. Sir George Beaumont, Sheridan, and Gainsborough had dined together, and the latter was more than usually pleasant and witty. The meeting was so much to their mutual satisfaction, that they agreed to have another day's happiness, and accordingly an early day was named when they should dine again together. They met, but a cloud had descended upon the spirit of Gainsborough, and he sat silent, with a look of fixed melancholy, which no wit could dissipate. At length he took Sheridan by the hand, led him out of the room, and said, "Now don't laugh, but listen. I shall die soon—I know it—I feel it—I have less time to live than my looks infer—but for this I care not. What oppresses my mind is this: I have many acquaintances and few friends; and as I wish to have one worthy man to accompany me to the grave, I am desirous of bespeaking you—will you come—aye or no?" Sheridan could scarcely repress a smile, as he made the required promise; the looks of Gainsborough cleared up like the sunshine of one of his own landscapes; throughout the rest of the evening his wit flowed, and his humour ran over, and the minutes, like those of the poet, winged their way with pleasure.

Between Gainsborough and Reynolds there seems to have been little good-will—surely the feuds of artists are more numerous than those of any other community of

Christians. They at one time appeared desirous of making something like an exchange of portraits; and Gainsborough obtained one sitting of the president—but the piece, like that of Thicknesse, was never completed. The cold and carefully meted out courtesy of the one little suited with the curious mixture of candour and caprice in the other; and like frost and fire, which some convulsion casts into momentary contact, they jostled, and then retired from each other—never more to meet till Gainsborough summoned Reynolds to his death-bed. They had, however, a better sense of natural dignity than to carry their personal animosities, as Barry afterwards did, into the Council; and if they differed in life, so in life they were mutually reconciled. Peace be with their memories!

The dates of Gainsborough's various productions cannot now be ascertained: it was one of the peculiarities of this eminent artist that he never put his name to any of his compositions, and very seldom even the date. He knew that his own happy character was too strongly impressed on his works to be denied; and thought, I suppose, that the excellence of a painting had nothing to do with the day or the year of its execution. "The Woodman and his Dog in the Storm" was one of his favourite compositions. There is a kind of rustic sublimity, new to English painting, in the heavenward look of the peasant, while the rain descends and the lightning flies. The same may be said of his "Shepherd's Boy in the Shower"—there is something inexpressibly mournful in the looks of both. The former unfortunately perished; but the sketch remains, and shows it to have been a work of the highest order. He valued it at one hundred guineas, but could find no purchaser while he lived; his widow sold it for five hundred guineas, after his death, to Lord Gainsborough, whose house was subsequently burnt to the ground. Another of his own chief favourite works was the "Cottage Girl with her Dog and Pitcher"—a happy and well-considered scene.

Like Reynolds, he painted standing in preference to sitting; and the pencils which he used had shafts, some

times two yards long. He stood as far from his sitter as he did from his picture, that the hues might be the same. He generally rose early, commenced painting between nine and ten o'clock, wrought for four or five hours, and then gave up the rest of the day to visits, to music, and to domestic enjoyment. He loved to sit by the side of his wife during the evenings, and make sketches of whatever occurred to his fancy, all of which he threw below the table, save such as were more than commonly happy, and those were preserved, and either finished as sketches or expanded into paintings. In summer he had lodgings at Hampstead, for the sake of the green fields and the luxury of pure air; and in winter he was often seen refreshing his eyes with light at the window, when fatigued with close employment.

He was an admirer of elegant penmanship, and looked at a well-written letter with something of the same pleasure as at a fine landscape. His love of music was constant; and he seems to have been kept under a spell by all kinds of melodious sounds. Smith relates, in his life of Nollekens, that he once found Colonel Hamilton playing so exquisitely to Gainsborough on the violin, that he exclaimed, "Go on, and I will give you the picture of the 'Boy at the Stile,' which you have so often wished to purchase of me." The colonel proceeded, and the painter stood in speechless admiration, with the tears of rapture on his cheek. Hamilton then called a coach, and carried away the picture. This gentleman was a first-rate violin-player, and had the additional merit of having sparred with Mendoza!

Of the personal history of this distinguished man, the penury of contemporary biography prevents me from saying more. Fuseli, when editing Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters," was, or affected to be, ignorant even of his Christian name; and so little did he feel the character of his works, that, on omitting some favourable notices in the supplement to the earlier editions, he says with a sneer, "Posterity will judge whether the name of Gainsborough deserves to be ranked with those of Vandyke, Rubens, and

Claude, in portrait and in landscape." With wiser taste, and better feeling, Walpole exclaims, "What frankness of nature in Gainsborough's landscapes, which entitle them to rank in the noblest collections!" Fuseli seems to have entertained an unaccountable dislike to our amiable and highly-gifted artist.

About a year after the promise obtained from Sheridan to attend his funeral, he went to hear the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and, sitting with his back to an open window, suddenly felt something inconceivably cold touch his neck above the shirt collar. It was accompanied with stiffness and pain. On returning home he mentioned what he felt to his wife and his niece; and, on looking, they saw a mark, about the size of a shilling, which was harder to the touch than the surrounding skin, and which he said still felt cold. The application of flannel did not remove it, and the artist, becoming alarmed, consulted, one after the other, the most eminent surgeons of London—John Hunter himself the last. They all declared there was no danger; but there was that presentiment upon Gainsborough from which none perhaps escape. He laid his hand repeatedly on his neck, and said to his sister, who had hastened to London to see him, "If this be a cancer, I am a dead man." And a cancer it proved to be. When this cruel disease fairly discovered itself, it was found to be inextricably interwoven with the threads of life, and he prepared himself for death with cheerfulness and perfect composure. He desired to be buried near his friend Kirby, in Kew churchyard; and that his name only should be cut on his gravestone. He sent for Reynolds, and peace was made between them. Gainsborough exclaimed to Sir Joshua, "We are all going to heaven, and Vandyke is of the company," and immediately expired—August 2nd, 1788, in the sixty-first year of his age. Sheridan and the president attended him to the grave.

In the spring which followed the death of Gainsborough, his widow, who survived him several years, made an exhibition of his works in Pall Mall, to the amount of

fifty-six pictures, and one hundred and forty-eight drawings. They were all marked for sale, and some of them sold; and the remainder were dispersed by auction. After experiencing a variety of fortune, the far-famed "Blue Boy" (the portrait of a youth in a blue dress), and the still more celebrated "Cottage Door," found their way into the gallery of Lord Grosvenor. The former has a natural elevation of look, and great ease of attitude; but the cerulean splendour of his coat is at first somewhat startling.* The latter deserves a more particular commendation. It represents a cottage matron with an infant in her arms, and several older children around her, enjoying themselves at the door of a little rustic cabin. This lodge in the wilderness is deeply shut up in a close-wooded nook; through the shafts of the trees glimpses of knolls and streams are obtained. There is uncommon breadth and mass about it, with a richness of colouring, a sort of brown and glossy goldenness, which is common in the works of the artist. The matron herself is the perfect beau-ideal of a youthful cottage dame—rustic loveliness exalted by natural gentility of expression.

In person Gainsborough was eminently handsome, and when he wished to please, no one had in greater perfection a ready grace and persuasive manner—gifts that cannot be acquired. It is to be regretted that those who wrote anything concerning him were careful in noting his eccentricities and chronicling his absurdities—forgetting much that was noble and excellent in the man. Little minds retain little things. His associates, such as Jackson and Thicknesse, perceived but those weaknesses which reduced him to their own level; they were slow or unwilling to perceive those qualities which raised him above them. The companions of the artist saved the chaff of his conversation and allowed the

* This picture, which is said to have been painted, as everyone knows, to refute Sir Joshua's objection to blue in mass in a painting, is not quite conclusive, though it must be owned that Gainsborough has done wonders with the cool tones at his command. In his treatment of blue he greatly resembled Vandyke.

corn to escape. Their sole wish seems to be to show him as the poet painted himself—

> "A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
> And half an idiot too—more helpless still;"

and, but for the splendid works of the man, which exhibit a mind that could think boldly and act wisely, they had succeeded.

He never attempted literary composition; he was more desirous to give than to receive instruction, and therefore paid no court to the learned. His letters are nevertheless such as few literary men have composed; they are distinguished by innocent gaiety and happy wit. He flutters from subject to subject, always easy and lively; agreeable when he trifles, and instructive even when he is extravagant. He has been reproached with occasional licentiousness in conversation; and something of the sort, I must admit, peeps out here and there in his letters. He was far, however, from being habitually gross.

He was decided in his resolutions. In the year 1784 he sent to the exhibition a whole-length portrait, with instructions to hang it as low as the floor would allow. Some bye-law interposed—the council remonstrated—Gainsborough desired the picture to be returned, which was complied with—and he never sent another.

His drawings are numerous and masterly; no artist has left behind him so many exquisite relics of this kind. "I have seen," said his friend Jackson, "at least a thousand, not one of which but what possesses merits, and some in a transcendent degree." Many of them are equal in point of character to his most finished performances. They have all great length and singular freedom of handling. His sketches of ladies are the finest things I have ever seen. The Duchess of Devonshire shows herself in side view and in front; she seems to move and breathe among the groves of Chatsworth. The names of many are lost, but this is not important. New light, however, has lately been thrown on these perishable things by the painter's grand-nephew,

Richard Lane, in whom much of his spirit survives. He has copied and published some two dozen of those fine sketches, and he ought to publish more.

The chief works of Gainsborough are not what is usually called landscape, for he had no wish to create gardens of paradise, and leave them to the sole enjoyment of the sun and breeze. The wildest nooks of his woods have their living tenants, and in all his glades and his valleys we see the sons and daughters of men. A deep human sympathy unites us with his pencil, and this is not lessened because all its works are stamped with the image of Old England. His paintings have a national look. He belongs to no school; he is not reflected from the glass of man, but from that of nature. He has not steeped his landscapes in the atmosphere of Italy, like Wilson, nor borrowed the postures of his portraits from the old masters, like Reynolds. No academy schooled down into uniformity and imitation the truly English and intrepid spirit of Gainsborough.

It must not, however, be denied, that his productions are sometimes disfigured by the impatience of his nature, and the fiery haste in which he wrought. Wishing to do quickly what his mind conceived strongly, he often neglected, in the dashing vigour of his hand, many of those lesser graces which lend art so much of its attractiveness. He felt the whole, indeed, at once; he was possessed fully with the sentiment of his subject; he struck off his favourite works at one continuous heat of thought, and all is clear, connected, and consistent. But, like nature herself, he performed some of his duties with a careless haste; and in many, both of his portraits and his landscapes, we see evident marks of inattention and hurry.

"It is certain," says Reynolds, "that all those odd scratches and marks which, on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures, and which, even to experienced painters, appear rather the effect of accident than design—this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance—by a kind of magic, at a certain distance, assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their

proper places, so that we can hardly forbear acknowledging the full effect of diligence under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence. That Gainsborough himself considered this peculiarity in his manner, and the power it possesses in exciting surprise, as a beauty in his works, may be inferred from the eager desire which we know he always expressed that his pictures at the exhibition should be seen near as well as at a distance." The president, however, weakens this vindication a little, when, in the succeeding sentences, he says, "the imagination supplies the rest, and perhaps more satisfactorily to the spectator, if not more exactly than the artist with all his care could have done." Sir Joshua, no doubt, felt all this; but artists must not count on eyes and imaginations such as fell to the lot of the president.

There is a charm about the children running wild in the landscapes of Gainsborough, which is more deeply felt by comparing them with those of Reynolds. The children of Sir Joshua are indeed beautiful creations, free, artless, and lovely; but they seem all to have been nursed in velvet laps and fed with golden spoons. There is a rustic grace, an untamed wildness, about the children of the other, which speak of the country and of neglected toilets. They are the offspring of nature, running free among woods as wild as themselves. They are not afraid of disordering their satins and wetting their kid shoes. They roll on the greensward, burrow like rabbits, and dabble in the running streams daily.

In this the works of Reynolds and Gainsborough are unlike each other—but both differ more materially from the great painters of Italy. The infants of Raphael, Titian, or Correggio are not meant for mortals, but for divinities. We hardly think of mothers' bosoms when we look at them. We admire—we can scarcely love them as much as we do the healthy children of our two eminent countrymen.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

PAINTING, like poetry, has followers, the body of whose genius is light compared to the length of its wings, and who, rising above the ordinary sympathies of our nature, are, like Napoleon, betrayed by a star which no eye can see save their own. To this rare class belonged William Blake.

He was the second son of James Blake and Catharine his wife, and born on the 28th of November 1757, at 28 Broad Street, Carnaby Market, London. His father, a respectable hosier, caused him to be educated for his own business, but the love of art came early upon the boy; he neglected the figures of arithmetic for those of Raphael and Reynolds; and his worthy parents often wondered how a child of theirs should have conceived a love for such unsubstantial vanities. The boy, it seems, was privately encouraged by his mother. The love of designing and sketching grew upon him, and he desired anxiously to be an artist. His father began to be pleased with the notice which his son obtained, and to fancy that a painter's study might, after all, be a fitter place than a hosier's shop for one who drew designs on the backs of all the shop bills, and made sketches on the counter. He consulted an eminent artist, who asked so large a sum for instruction that the prudent shopkeeper hesitated; and young Blake declared he would prefer being an engraver—a profession which would bring bread at least, and through which he would be connected with painting. It was, indeed, time to dispose of him. In addition to his attachment to art he

had displayed poetic symptoms—scraps of paper and the blank leaves of books were found covered with groups and stanzas. When his father saw sketches at the top of the sheet and verses at the bottom, he took him away to James Basire, the engraver, in Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and bound him apprentice for seven years. He was then fourteen years old.

It is told of Blake that at ten years of age he became an artist, and at twelve a poet. Of his boyish pencillings I can find no traces; but of his early intercourse with the Muse the proof lies before me in seventy pages of verse, written, he says, between his twelfth and his twentieth year, and published, by the advice of friends, when he was thirty. There are songs, ballads, and a dramatic poem—rude, sometimes, and unmelodious, but full of fine thought and deep and peculiar feeling. To those who love poetry for the music of its bells, these seventy pages will sound harsh and dissonant; but by others they will be more kindly looked upon. John Flaxman, a judge in all things of a poetic nature, was so touched with many passages that he not only counselled their publication, but joined with a gentleman of the name of Matthews in the expense, and presented the printed sheets to the artist to dispose of for his own advantage. One of these productions is an address to the Muses—a common theme, but sung in no common manner:—

"Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the east,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

"Whether in heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

"Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine! forsaking poesie;

"How have ye left the ancient love,
That Bards of old enjoy'd in you,—
The languid strings now scarcely move,
The sound is forced—the notes are few."

The little poem called "The Tiger" has been admired for the force and vigour of its thoughts by poets of high name. Many could weave smoother lines—few could stamp such living images:—

"Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?

"In what distant deeps or skies
Burn'd that fire within thine eyes?
On what wings dared he aspire—
What the hand dared seize the fire?

"And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
When thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand formed thy dread feet?

"What the hammer! what the chain!
Knit thy strength and forged thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dared thy deadly terrors clasp?

"When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile, his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?"

In the dramatic poem of "King Edward the Third" there are many nervous lines, and even whole passages of high merit. The structure of the verse is often defective, and the arrangement inharmonious; but before the ear is thoroughly offended, it is soothed by some touch of deep melody and poetic thought. The princes and earls of England are conferring together on the eve of the battle of Cressy. The Black Prince takes Chandos aside, and says—

"Now we're alone, John Chandos, I'll unburthen
And breathe my hopes into the burning air—
Where thousand Deaths are posting up and down,
Commission'd to this fatal field of Cressy:
Methinks I see them arm my gallant soldiers,
And gird the sword upon each thigh, and fit
The shining helm, and string each stubborn bow,
And dance to the neighing of the steeds;—
Methinks the shout begins—the battle burns;—
Methinks I see them perch on English crests,
And roar the wild flame of fierce war upon
The throng'd enemy."

In the same high poetic spirit Sir Walter Manny converses with a genuine old English warrior, Sir Thomas Dagworth—

"O, Dagworth!—France is sick!—the very sky,
Though sunshine light it, seems to me as pale
As is the fainting man on his death-bed,
Whose face is shown by light of sickly taper—
It makes me sad and sick unto the heart;
Thousands must fall to-day."

Sir Thomas answers:—

"Thousands of souls must leave this prison-house
To be exalted to those heavenly fields
Where songs of triumph, palms of victory,
Where peace, and joy, and love, and calm content,
Sit singing on the azure clouds, and strew
The flowers of heaven upon the banquet table.
Bind ardent hope upon your feet, like shoes,
Put on the robe of preparation.
The table, it is spread in shining heaven,
The flowers of immortality are blown;
Let those who fight, fight in good steadfastness;
And those who fall shall rise in victory."

I might transcribe from these modest and unnoticed pages many such passages. It would be unfair not to mention that the same volume contains some wild and incoherent prose, in which we may trace more than the dawning of those strange, mystical, and mysterious fancies on which Blake subsequently misemployed his pencil. There is much that is weak, and something that is strong,

and a great deal that is wild and mad, and all so strangely mingled that little or no meaning can be assigned to it—it seems like a lamentation over the disasters which came on England during the reign of King John.

Though Blake lost himself sometimes in the enchanted region of song, he seems not to have neglected to make himself master of the graver, or to have forgotten his love of designs and sketches. He was a dutiful servant to Basire, and he studied occasionally under Flaxman and Fuseli; but it was his chief delight to retire to the solitude of his room, and there make drawings, and illustrate these with verses, to be hung up together in his mother's chamber. He was always at work—he called amusement idleness, sight-seeing vanity, and money-making the ruin of all high aspirations. "Were I to love money," he said, "I should lose all power of thought; desire of gain deadens the genius of man. I might roll in wealth and ride in a golden chariot were I to listen to the voice of parsimony. My business is not to gather gold, but to make glorious shapes, expressing god-like sentiments." The day was given to the graver, by which he earned enough to maintain himself respectably; and he bestowed his evenings upon painting and poetry, and intertwined these so closely in his compositions that they cannot well be separated.

When he was six-and-twenty years old he married Katherine Boutcher, a young woman of humble connections—the dark-eyed Kate of several of his lyric poems. She lived near his father's house, and was noticed by Blake for the whiteness of her hand, the brightness of her eyes, and a slim and handsome shape, corresponding with his own notions of sylphs and naïads. As he was an original in all things, it would have been out of character to fall in love like an ordinary mortal. He was describing one evening in company the pains he had suffered from some capricious lady or another, when Katherine Boutcher said, "I pity you from my heart." "Do you pity me?" said Blake, "then I love you for that." "And I love you," said the frank-hearted lass, and so the courtship began.

He tried how well she looked in a drawing, then how her charms became verse; and finding moreover that she had good domestic qualities, he married her. They lived together long and happily.

She seemed to have been created on purpose for Blake: she believed him to be the finest genius on earth; she believed in his verse; she believed in his designs; and to the wildest flight of his imagination she bowed the knee, and was a worshipper. She set his house in good order, prepared his frugal meal, learned to think as he thought, and, indulging him in his harmless absurdities, became, as it were, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. She learned —what a young and handsome woman is seldom apt to learn—to despise gaudy dresses, costly meals, pleasant company, and agreeable invitations; she found out the way of being happy at home, living on the simplest of food, and contented in the homeliest of clothing. It was no ordinary mind which could do all this; and she whom Blake emphatically called his "beloved" was no ordinary woman. She wrought off in the press the impressions of his plates; she coloured them with a light and neat hand; made drawings much in the spirit of her husband's compositions, and almost rivalled him in all things save in the power which he possessed in seeing visions of any individual, living or dead, whenever he chose to see them.

His marriage, I have heard, was not agreeable to his father; and he then left his roof and resided with his wife in Green Street, Leicester Fields. He returned to Broad Street on the death of his father, a devout man, and an honest shopkeeper of fifty years' standing, took a first floor and a shop, and in company with one Parker, who had been his fellow-apprentice, commenced printseller. His wife attended to the business, and Blake continued to engrave, and took Robert, his favourite brother, for a pupil. This speculation did not succeed—his brother, too, sickened and died; he had a dispute with Parker, the shop was relinquished, and he removed to 28 Poland Street. Here he commenced that series of works which gave him a right

to be numbered among the men of genius of his country. In sketching designs, engraving plates, writing songs, and composing music he employed his time, with his wife sitting at his side, encouraging him in all his undertakings. As he drew the figure he meditated the song which was to accompany it, and the music to which the verse was to be sung was the offspring, too, of the same moment. Of his music there are no specimens—he wanted the art of noting it down; if it equalled many of his drawings, and some of his songs, we have lost melodies of real value.

The first fruits were the "Songs of Innocence and Experience," a work original and natural, and of high merit, both in poetry and in painting. It consists of some sixty-five or seventy scenes, presenting images of youth and manhood; of domestic sadness and fireside joy; of the gaiety, and innocence, and happiness of childhood. Every scene has its poetical accompaniment, curiously interwoven with the group or the landscape, and forming, from the beauty of the colour and the prettiness of the pencilling, a very fair picture of itself. Those designs are in general highly poetical—more allied, however, to heaven than to earth—a kind of spiritual abstractions, and indicating a better world and fuller happiness than mortals enjoy. The picture of Innocence is introduced with the following sweet verses:—

"Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me—

Pipe a song about a lamb;
So I piped with merry cheer.
Piper, pipe that song again—
So I piped—he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,
Sing thy songs of happy cheer—
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read—
So he vanish'd from my sight:
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear."

Another song, called "The Chimney Sweeper," is rude enough truly, but yet not without pathos :—

"When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry—Weep! weep! weep!
So your chimneys I clean and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,
Hush, Tom, never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

And so he was quiet—and that very night,
As Tommy was a-sleeping, he had such a sight;
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel, who had a bright key,
He open'd the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then, naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father and never want joy.

And so Tommy awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work;
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm,
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm."*

* Mr. Swinburne, in his Critical Essay on Blake, writes of these "Songs of Innocence" :—"If elsewhere the artist's strange strength of thought and hand is more visible, nowhere is there such pure sweetness and singleness of design in his work. All the tremulous and tender splendour of spring is united into the written work and

In a higher and better spirit he wrought with his pencil. But then he imagined himself under spiritual influences; he saw the forms and listened to the voices of the worthies of other days; the past and the future were before him, and he heard, in imagination, even that awful voice which called on Adam amongst the trees of the garden. In this kind of dreaming abstraction he lived much of his life; all his works are stamped with it, and though they owe much of their mysticism and obscurity to the circumstance, there can be no doubt that they also owe to it much of their singular loveliness and beauty. It was wonderful that he could thus, month after month, and year after year, lay down his graver after it had won him his daily wages, and retire from the battle for bread, to disport his fancy amid scenes of more than earthly splendour, and creatures pure as unfallen dew.

In this lay the weakness and the strength of Blake, and those who desire to feel the character of his compositions must be familiar with his history and the peculiarities of his mind. He was by nature a poet, a dreamer, and an enthusiast. The eminence which it had been the first ambition of his youth to climb was visible before him, and he saw on its ascent or on its summit those who had started earlier in the race of fame. He felt conscious of his own merit, but was not aware of the thousand obstacles which were ready to interpose. He thought that he had but to sing songs and draw designs, and become great and famous.

coloured draught; every page has the smell of April. Over all things given, the sleep of flocks and the growth of leaves, the laughter in divided lips of flowers and the music at the moulded mouth of the flute-player, there is cast a pure fine veil of light, softer than sleep and keener than sunshine. The sweetness of sky and leaf, of grass and water—the bright light life of bird, child, and beast—is, so to speak, kept fresh by some graver sense of faithful and mysterious love, explained and vivified by a conscience and purpose in the artist's hand and mind. Such a fiery outbreak of spring, such an insurrection of fierce floral life and radiant riot of childish power and pleasure, no poet or painter ever gave before; such lustre of green leaves and flushed limbs, kindled cloud and fervent fleece, was never wrought into speech or shape."

The crosses which genius is heir to had been wholly unforeseen, and they befell him early. He wanted, too, the skill of hand, and fine tact of fancy and taste, to impress upon the offspring of his thoughts that popular shape which gives such productions immediate circulation. His works were, therefore, looked coldly on by the world, and were only esteemed by men of poetic minds, or those who were fond of things out of the common way. He earned a little fame, but no money, by these speculations, and had to depend for bread on the labours of the graver.

All this neither crushed his spirit nor induced him to work more in the way of the world; but it had a visible influence upon his mind. He became more seriously thoughtful, avoided the company of men, and lived in the manner of a hermit in that vast wilderness, London. Necessity made him frugal, and honesty and independence prescribed plain clothes, homely fare, and a cheap habitation. He was thus compelled more than ever to retire to worlds of his own creating, and seek solace in visions of paradise for the joys which the earth denied him. By frequent indulgence in these imaginings he gradually began to believe in the reality of what dreaming fancy painted—the pictured forms which swarmed before his eyes assumed, in his apprehension, the stability of positive revelations, and he mistook the vivid figures which his professional imagination shaped for the poets, and heroes, and princes of old. Amongst his friends he at length ventured to intimate that the designs on which he was engaged were not from his own mind, but copied from grand works revealed to him in visions; and those who believed that would readily lend an ear to the assurance that he was commanded to execute his performances by a celestial tongue!

Of these imaginary visitations he made good use, when he invented his truly original and beautiful mode of engraving and tinting his plates. He had made the designs of his "Days of Innocence," and was meditating, he said, on the best means of multiplying their resemblance in form and in hue; he felt sorely perplexed. At last he was made

aware that the spirit of his favourite brother Robert was in the room, and to this celestial visitor he applied for counsel. The spirit advised him at once: "Write," he said, "the poetry, and draw the designs upon the copper with a certain liquid (which he named, and which Blake ever kept a secret): then cut the plain parts of the plate down with aquafortis, and this will give the whole, both poetry and figures, in the manner of a stereotype." The plan recommended by this gracious spirit was adopted; the plates were engraved, and the work printed off. The artist then added a peculiar beauty of his own. He tinted both the figures and the verse with a variety of colours, amongst which, while yellow prevails, the whole has a rich and lustrous beauty, to which I know little that can be compared. The size of these prints is four inches and a-half high by three inches wide. The original genius of Blake was always confined, through poverty, to small dimensions. Sixty-five plates of copper were an object to him who had little money. The "Gates of Paradise," a work of sixteen designs, and those exceedingly small, was his next undertaking. The meaning of the artist is not a little obscure; it seems to have been his object to represent the innocence, the happiness, and the upward aspirations of man. They bespeak one intimately acquainted with the looks and the feelings of children. Over them there is shed a kind of mysterious halo which raises feelings of devotion. The "Songs of Innocence" and the "Gates of Paradise" became popular among the collectors of prints. To the sketch-book and the cabinet the works of Blake are unfortunately confined.

If there be mystery in the meaning of the "Gates of Paradise," his succeeding performance, by name "URIZEN," has the merit or the fault of surpassing all human comprehension. The spirit which dictated this strange work was undoubtedly a dark one; nor does the strange kind of prose which is intermingled with the figures serve to enlighten us. There are in all twenty-seven designs, representing beings human, demoniac, and divine, in situations

of pain and sorrow and suffering. One character—evidently an evil spirit—appears in most of the plates; the horrors of hell, and the terrors of darkness and divine wrath, seem his sole portion. His swims in gulfs of fire, descends in cataracts of flame, holds combats with scaly serpents, or writhes in anguish without any visible cause. One of his exploits is to chase a female soul through a narrow gate, and hurl her headlong down into a darksome pit. The wild verses, which are scattered here and there, talk of the sons and the daughters of Urizen. He seems to have extracted these twenty-seven scenes out of many visions; what he meant by them even his wife declared she could not tell, though she was sure they had a meaning, and a fine one. Something like the fall of Lucifer and the creation of Man is dimly visible in this extravagant work. It is not a little fearful to look upon—a powerful, dark, terrible, though undefined and indescribable, impression is left on the mind; and it is in no haste to be gone. The size of the designs is four inches by six; they bear date, "Lambeth, 1794." He had left Poland Street, and was residing in Hercules Buildings.

The name of Blake began now to be known a little, and Edwards, the bookseller, employed him to illustrate Young's "Night Thoughts." The reward in money was small, but the temptation in fame was great; the work was performed something in the manner of old books with illuminated margins. Along the ample margins which the poetry left on the page the artist sketched his fanciful creations, contracting or expanding them according to the space. Some of those designs were in keeping with the poems, but there were others which alarmed fastidious people: the serious and the pious were not prepared to admire shapes trembling in nudity round the verses of a grave divine. In the exuberance of Young there are many fine figures; but they are figures of speech only, on which art should waste none of its skill. This work was so much, in many parts, to the satisfaction of Flaxman that he introduced Blake to Hayley, the poet, who, in 1800, persuaded him to remove

to Felpham in Sussex, to make engravings for the "Life of Cowper." To that place he accordingly went with his wife and sister, and was welcomed by Hayley with much affection. Of his journey and his feelings he gives the following account to Flaxman, whom he usually addressed thus, "Dear Sculptor of Eternity":—

"We are arrived safe at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought it, and more convenient. It is a perfect model for cottages and, I think, for palaces of magnificence, only enlarging and not altering its proportions, and adding ornaments and not principals. Nothing can be more grand than its simplicity and usefulness. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates; her windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard, and their forms more distinctly seen; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses. My wife and sister are both well, and are courting Neptune for an embrace."

Thus far had he written in the language and feelings of a person of upper air; though some of the expressions are tinctured with the peculiar enthusiasm of the man, they might find shelter under the license of figurative speech, and pass muster as the poetic language of new-found happiness. Blake thus continues:—

"And now begins a new life, because another covering of earth is shaken off. I am more famed in heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life, and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why, then, should I be anxious about the riches or fame of mortality? You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel, my friend and companion from eternity. Farewell, my dear friend, remember me and my wife in love and friendship to Mrs. Flaxman, whom we ardently desire to entertain beneath our thatched roof of russet gold."

This letter, written in the year 1800, gives the true

twofold image of the author's mind. During the day he was a man of sagacity and sense, who handled his graver wisely, and conversed in a wholesome and pleasant manner; in the evening, when he had done his prescribed task, he gave a loose to his imagination. While employed on those engravings which accompany the works of Cowper, he saw such company as the country where he resided afforded, and talked with Hayley about poetry with a feeling to which the author of the "Triumphs of Temper" was an utter stranger; but at the close of day away went Blake to the sea-shore to indulge in his own thoughts and

"High converse with the dead to hold."

Here he forgot the present moment, and lived in the past. He conceived, verily, that he had lived in other days, and had formed friendships with Homer and Moses, with Pindar and Virgil, with Dante and Milton. These great men, he asserted, appeared to him in visions, and even entered into conversation. Milton, in a moment of confidence, entrusted him with a whole poem of his, which the world had never seen; but unfortunately the communication was oral, and the poetry seemed to have lost much of its brightness in Blake's recitation. When asked about the looks of those visions, he answered, "They are all majestic shadows, grey but luminous, and superior to the common height of men." It was evident that the solitude of the country gave him a larger swing in imaginary matters. His wife often accompanied him to these strange interviews; she saw nothing and heard as little, but she was certain that her husband both heard and saw.

Blake's mind at all times resembled that first page in the magician's book of gramoury, which made

"The cobweb on the dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall."

His mind could convert the most ordinary occurrence into something mystical and supernatural. He often saw less majestic shapes than those of the poets of old. "Did you

ever see a fairy's funeral, madam?" he once said to a lady, who happened to sit by him in company. "Never, sir!" was the answer. "I have," said Blake, "but not before last night. I was walking alone in my garden; there was great stillness among the branches and flowers, and more than common sweetness in the air. I heard a low and pleasant sound, and I knew not whence it came. At last I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures of the size and colour of green and grey grasshoppers, bearing a body laid out on a rose-leaf, which they buried with songs, and then disappeared. It was a fairy funeral." It would, perhaps, have been better for his fame had he connected it more with the superstitious beliefs of his country—amongst the elves and fairies his fancy might have wandered at will—their popular character would perhaps have kept him within the bounds of traditionary belief, and the sea of his imagination might have had a shore.

After a residence of three years in his cottage at Felpham, he removed to 17 South Molton Street, London, where he lived seventeen years. He came back to town with a fancy not a little exalted by the solitude of the country, and in this mood designed and engraved an extensive and strange work which he entitled "Jerusalem." A production so exclusively wild was not allowed to make its appearance in an ordinary way: he thus announced it:—"After my three years' slumber on the banks of the ocean, I again display my giant forms to the public." Of these designs there are no less than a hundred; what their meaning is the artist has left unexplained. It seems of a religious, political, and spiritual kind, and wanders from hell to heaven, and from heaven to earth—now glancing into the distractions of our own days, and then making a transition to the antediluvians. The crowning defect is obscurity; meaning seems now and then about to dawn; you turn plate after plate, and read motto after motto, in the hope of escaping from darkness into light. But the first might as well be looked at last; the whole seems a

riddle which no ingenuity can solve. Yet, if the work be looked at for form and effect rather than for meaning, many figures may be pronounced worthy of Michael Angelo. There is wonderful freedom of attitude and position. Men, spirits, gods, and angels move with an ease which makes one lament that we know not wherefore they are put in motion. Well might Hayley call him his "gentle visionary Blake." He considered the "Jerusalem" to be his greatest work, and for a set of the tinted engravings charged twenty-five guineas. Few joined the artist in his admiration. The "Jerusalem," with all its giant forms, failed to force its way into circulation.

His next work was the Illustrations of Blair's "Grave," which came to the world with the following commendation by Fuseli :—"The author of the moral series before us has endeavoured to awaken sensibility by touching our sympathies with nearer, less ambiguous, and less ludicrous imagery than what mythology, gothic superstition, or symbols, as far-fetched as inadequate, could supply. His avocation has been chiefly employed to spread a familiar and domestic atmosphere round the most important of all subjects, to connect the visible and the invisible world without provoking probability, and to lead the eye from the milder light of time to the radiations of eternity." For these twelve "Inventions," as he called them, Blake received twenty guineas from Cromek, the engraver—a man of skill in art and taste in literature. The price was little, but nevertheless it was more than he usually received for such productions. He also undertook to engrave them.

But Blake's mode of engraving was as peculiar as his style of designing ; it had little of that grace of execution about it which attracts customers, and the "Inventions," after an experiment or two, were placed under the fashionable graver of Louis Schiavonetti. Blake was deeply incensed—he complained that he was deprived of the profit of engraving his own designs, and, with even less justice, that Schiavonetti was unfit for the task.

Some of these twelve "Inventions" are natural and

poetic, others exhibit laborious attempts at the terrific and the sublime. "The Old Man at Death's Door" is one of the best; in "The Last Day" there are fine groups and admirable single figures. "The Wise Ones of the Earth Pleading before the Inexorable Throne," and the "Descent of the Condemned," are creations of a high order. "The Death of the Strong Wicked Man" is fearful and extravagant, and the flames in which the soul departs from the body have no warrant in the poem or in belief. "The Descent of Christ into the Grave" is formal and tame; and the hoary old soul, in the "Death of the Good Man," travelling heavenward between two ordinary angels, required little outlay of fancy. The frontispiece—a naked Angel descending headlong, and rousing the dead with the sound of the last trumpet—alarmed the devout people of the north, and made maids and matrons retire behind their fans.

If the tranquillity of Blake's life was a little disturbed by the dispute about the twelve "Inventions," it was completely shaken by the controversy which now arose between him and Cromek respecting his "Canterbury Pilgrimage," and the famous one by Stothard. That two artists at one and the same time should choose the same subject for the pencil seems scarcely credible,—especially when such subject was not of a temporary interest. The coincidence here was so close, that Blake accused Stothard of obtaining knowledge of his design through Cromek, while Stothard, with equal warmth, asserted that Blake had commenced his picture in rivalry of himself. Blake declared that Cromek had actually commissioned him to paint the "Pilgrimage" before Stothard thought of his; to which Cromek replied that the order had been given in a vision, for he never gave it. Stothard, a man as little likely to be led aside from truth by love of gain as by visions, added to Cromek's denial the startling testimony that Blake visited him during the early progress of his picture, and expressed his approbation of it in such terms that he proposed to introduce Blake's portrait in the procession, as a mark of

esteem. It is probable that Blake obeyed some imaginary revelation in this matter, and mistook it for the order of an earthly employer; but whether commissioned by a vision or by mortal lips, his "Canterbury Pilgrimage" made its appearance in an exhibition of his principal works in the house of his brother in Broad Street, during the summer of 1809.

Of original designs, this singular exhibition contained sixteen—they were announced as chiefly "of a spiritual and political nature"—but then the spiritual works and political feelings of Blake were unlike those of any other man. One piece represented "The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding Leviathan." Another, "The Spiritual Form of Pitt guiding Behemoth." This probably confounded both divines and politicians; there is no doubt that plain men went wondering away. The chief attraction was "The Canterbury Pilgrimage," not indeed from its excellence, but from the circumstance of its origin, which was well known about town, and pointedly alluded to in the catalogue. The picture is a failure. Blake was too great a visionary for dealing with such literal wantons as the Wife of Bath and her jolly companions. The natural flesh and blood of Chaucer prevailed against him. He gives grossness of body for grossness of mind—tries to be merry and wicked—and in vain.

Those who missed instruction in his pictures found entertainment in his catalogue, a wild performance, overflowing with the oddities and dreams of the author—which may be considered as a kind of public declaration of his faith concerning art and artists. His first anxiety is about his colours. "Colouring," says this new lecturer on the Chiaro-scuro, "does not depend on where the colours are put, but on where the lights and darks are put, and all depends on form or outline. Where that is wrong the colouring never can be right, and it is always wrong in Titian and Correggio, Rubens and Rembrandt; till we get rid of them we shall never equal Raphael and Albert Durer, Michael Angelo and Julio Romano. Clearness and

precision have been my chief objects in painting these pictures—clear colours and firm, determinate lineaments, unbroken by shadows—which ought to display, and not hide form, as is the practice of the later schools of Italy and Flanders. The picture of 'The Spiritual Form of Pitt' is a proof of power of colours, unsullied with oil or with any cloggy vehicle. Oil has been falsely supposed to give strength to colours, but a little consideration must show the fallacy of this opinion. Oil will not drink or absorb colour enough to stand the test of any little time, and of the air. Let the works of artists since Rubens' time witness to the villainy of those who first brought oil-painting into general opinion and practice, since which we have never had a picture painted that would show itself by the side of an earlier composition. This is an awful thing to say to oil-painters; they may call it madness, but it is true. All the genuine old little pictures are in fresco and not in oil."

Having settled the true principles and proper materials of colour, he proceeds to open up the mystery of his own productions. Those who failed to comprehend the pictures on looking at them had only to turn to the following account of the Pitt and the Nelson:—"These two pictures," he says, "are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian antiquity, which are still preserved in rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals now lost, or perhaps buried to some happier age. The Artist, having been taken, in vision, to the ancient republics, monarchies, and patriarchates of Asia, has seen those wonderful originals, called in the sacred Scriptures the cherubim, which were painted and sculptured on the walls of temples, towns, cities, palaces, and erected in the highly cultivated states of Egypt, Moab, and Edom, among the rivers of Paradise, being originals from which the Greeks and Hetrurians copied Hercules, Venus, Apollo, and all the ground-works of ancient art. They were executed in a very superior style to those justly-admired copies, being

with their accompaniments terrific and grand in the highest degree. The artist has endeavoured to emulate the grandeur of those scenes in his vision, and to apply it to modern times on a smaller scale. The Greek Muses are daughters of Memory, and not of Inspiration or Imagination, and therefore not authors of such sublime conceptions; some of these wonderful originals were one hundred feet in height; some were painted as pictures, some were carved as basso-relievos, and some as groups of statues, all containing mythological and recondite meaning. The artist wishes it was now the fashion to make such monuments, and then he should not doubt of having a national commission to execute those pictures of Nelson and Pitt on a scale suitable to the grandeur of the nation who is the parent of his heroes, in highly-finished fresco, where the colours would be as permanent as precious stones."

The man who could not only write down, but deliberately correct the printer's sheets which recorded matter so utterly wild and mad, was at the same time perfectly sensible to the exquisite nature of Chaucer's delineations, and felt rightly what sort of skill his inimitable pilgrims required at the hand of an artist. He who saw visions in Cœle-Syria, and statues a hundred feet high, wrote thus concerning Chaucer —"The characters of his pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations; as one age falls another rises, different to mortal sight, but to immortals only the same: for we see the same characters repeated again and again, in animals, in vegetables, and in men; nothing new occurs in identical existence. Accident ever varies: substance can never suffer change nor decay. Of Chaucer's characters, some of the names or titles are altered by time, but the characters themselves for ever remain unaltered, and consequently they are the physiognomies of universal human life, beyond which nature never steps. Names alter—things never alter; I have known multitudes of those who would have been monks in the age of monkery, who in this deistical age are deists. As Linnæus numbered the plants, so Chaucer numbered the classes of men."

His own notions, and much of his peculiar practice in art, are scattered at random over the pages of this curious production. His love of a distinct outline made him use close and clinging dresses; they are frequently very graceful —at other times they are constrained, and deform the figures which they so scantily cover. "The great and golden rule of art," says he, "is this:—that the more distinct and sharp and wiry the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art; and the less keen and sharp this external line, the greater is the evidence of weak, imitative plagiarism and bungling: Protogenes and Apelles knew each other by this line. How do we distinguish the oak from the beech, the horse from the ox, but by the bounding outline? How do we distinguish one face or countenance from another, but by the bounding line and its infinite inflections and movements? Leave out this line, and you leave out life itself: all is chaos again, and the line of the Almighty must be drawn out upon it, before man or beast can exist."

These abominations, concealed outline and tricks of colour, now bring on one of those visionary fits to which Blake was so liable, and he narrates, with the most amusing wildness, sundry revelations made to him concerning them. He informs us that certain painters were *demons*— let loose on earth to confound the "sharp, wiry outline," and fill men's minds with fear and perturbations. He signifies that he himself was for some time a miserable instrument in the hands of Chiaro-scuro demons, who employed him in making "experiment pictures in oil." "These pictures," says he, "were the result of temptations and perturbations labouring to destroy imaginative power by means of that infernal machine called Chiaro-scuro, in the hands of Venetian and Flemish demons, who hate the Roman and Florentine schools. They cause that everything in art shall become a machine; they cause that the execution shall be all blocked up with brown shadows; they put the artist in fear and doubt of his own original conception. The spirit of Titian was particularly

active in raising doubts concerning the possibility of executing without a model. Rubens is a most outrageous demon, and by infusing the remembrances of his pictures and style of execution, hinders all power of individual thought. Correggio is a soft and effeminate, consequently a most cruel demon, whose whole delight is to cause endless labour to whoever suffers him to enter his mind." When all this is translated into the language of sublunary life, it only means that Blake was haunted with the excellences of other men's works, and finding himself unequal to the task of rivalling the soft and glowing colours and singular effects of light and shade of certain great masters, betook himself to the study of others not less eminent, who happened to have laid out their strength in outline.

The impression which the talents and oddities of Blake made on men of taste and genius is well described by one whose judgment in whatever is poetical no one will question. Charles Lamb had communicated to James Montgomery's book on chimney-sweepers the little song by Blake, which I have already quoted; it touched the feelings of Bernard Barton so deeply, that he made inquiries of his friend about the author, upon which he received the following letter in explanation, written some six years ago —"Blake is a real name, I assure you," says Lamb; "and a most extraordinary man he is, if he be still living. He is the Blake whose wild designs accompany a splendid edition of Blair's 'Grave,' which you may perhaps have seen or heard of; in one of which he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass, fac-simile to itself—left behind on the death-bed. He paints in water-colours marvellous strange pictures—visions of his brain which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has seen the old Welsh bards on Snowdon. He has seen the beautifulest, the strongest, and the ugliest man left alive from the massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen these paintings), and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael

and Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions and prophetic visions with himself. The painters in oil (which he will have it that neither of these great masters ever practised) he affirms to have been the ruin of art; and asserts that all the while he was engaged on his water-paintings, Titian was disturbing him—Titian, the evil genius of oil-painting! His pictures, one in particular, the "Canterbury Pilgrims," have wonderful power and spirit, but hard and dry, yet with grace. He has written a catalogue of them, with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of vision. I have heard of his poems, but never seen them. There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning

> "'Tiger, tiger, burning bright,
> Through the deserts of the night,'"

which is glorious. But, alas! I have not the book, and the man is flown, whither I know not—to Hades or a mad-house—but I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age."

To describe the conversations which Blake held in prose with demons, and in verse with angels, would fill volumes, and an ordinary gallery could not contain all the heads which he drew of his visionary visitants. That all this was real he himself most sincerely believed; nay, so infectious was his enthusiasm, that some acute and sensible persons who heard him expatiate shook their heads, and hinted that he was an extraordinary man, and that there might be something in the matter. One of his brethren, an artist of some note, employed him frequently in drawing the portraits of those who appeared to him in visions. The most propitious time for those "angel visits" was from nine at night till five in the morning; and so docile were his spiritual sitters, that they appeared at the wish of his friends. Sometimes, however, the shape which he desired to draw was long in appearing, and he sat with his pencil and paper ready and his eyes idly roaming in vacancy; all

at once the vision came upon him, and he began to work like one possessed.

He was requested to draw the likeness of Sir William Wallace: the eye of Blake sparkled, for he admired heroes. "William Wallace!" he exclaimed; "I see him now—there, there; how noble he looks—reach me my things!" Having drawn for some time, with the same care of hand and steadiness of eye as if a living sitter had been before him, Blake stopt suddenly, and said, "I cannot finish him—Edward the First has stept in between him and me." "That's lucky," said his friend, "for I want the portrait of Edward too." Blake took another sheet of paper, and sketched the features of Plantagenet; upon which his majesty politely vanished, and the artist finished the head of Wallace. "And pray, sir," said a gentleman, who heard Blake's friend tell his story, "was Sir William Wallace an heroic-looking man? And what sort of personage was Edward?" The answer was: "There they are, sir, both framed and hanging on the wall behind you; judge for yourself." "I looked (says my informant) and saw two warlike heads of the size of common life. That of Wallace was noble and heroic, that of Edward stern and bloody. The first had the front of a god, the latter the aspect of a demon."

The friend who obliged me with these anecdotes, on observing the interest which I took in the subject, said, "I know much about Blake—I was his companion for nine years. I have sat beside him from ten at night till three in the morning, sometimes slumbering and sometimes waking, but Blake never slept; he sat with a pencil and paper drawing portraits of those whom I most desired to see. I will show you, sir, some of these works." He took out a large book filled with drawings, opened it, and continued, "Observe the poetic fervour of that face—it is Pindar as he stood a conqueror in the Olympic games. And this lovely creature is Corinna, who conquered in poetry in the same place. That lady is Lais, the courtesan—with the impudence which is part of her

profession, she stept in between Blake and Corinna, and he was obliged to paint her to get her away! There! that is a face of a different stamp—can you conjecture who he is?" "Some scoundrel, I should think, sir." "There, now—that is a strong proof of the accuracy of Blake—he is a scoundrel indeed! The very individual task-master whom Moses slew in Egypt. And who is this, now—only imagine who this is? "Other than a good one, I doubt, sir." "You are right; it is a fiend—he resembles, and this is remarkable, two men who shall be nameless; one is a great lawyer, and the other—I wish I could name him—is a suborner of false witnesses. The other head, now?—this speaks for itself—it is the head of Herod; how like an eminent officer in the army!"

He closed the book, and taking out a small panel from a private drawer, said, "This is the last which I shall show you; but it is the greatest curiosity of all. Only look at the splendour of the colouring and the original character of the thing!" "I see," said I, "a naked figure with a strong body and a short neck—with burning eyes which long for moisture, and a face worthy of a murderer, holding a bloody cup in his clawed hands, out of which it seems eager to drink. I never saw any shape so strange, nor did I ever see any colouring so curiously splendid—a kind of glistening green and dusky gold, beautifully varnished. But what in the world is it?" "It is a ghost, sir—the ghost of a flea—a spiritualisation of the thing!" "He saw this in a vision, then?" I said. "I'll tell you all about it, sir. I called on him one evening, and found Blake more than usually excited. He told me he had seen a wonderful thing—the ghost of a flea! 'And did you make a drawing of him?' I inquired. 'No indeed,' said he; 'I wish I had, but I shall, if he appears again!' He looked earnestly into a corner of the room, and then said, 'Here he is—reach me my things—I shall keep my eye on him. There he comes! his eager tongue whisking out of his mouth, a cup in his

hand to hold blood, and covered with a scaly skin of gold and green;'—as he described him so he drew him."

Visions, such as are said to arise in the sight of those who indulge in opium, were frequently present to Blake; nevertheless he sometimes desired to see a spirit in vain. "For many years," said he, "I longed to see Satan—I never could believe that he was the vulgar fiend which our legends represent him—I imagined him a classic spirit, such as he appeared to him of Uz, with some of his original splendour about him. At last I saw him. I was going upstairs in the dark, when suddenly a light came streaming amongst my feet; I turned round, and there he was looking fiercely at me through the iron grating of my staircase window. I called for my things—Katherine thought the fit of song was on me, and brought me pen and ink—I said, hush!—never mind—this will do—as he appeared so I drew him—there he is." Upon this, Blake took out a piece of paper with a grated window sketched on it, while through the bars glared the most frightful phantom that ever man imagined. Its eyes were large and like live coals—its teeth as long as those of a harrow, and the claws seemed such as might appear in the distempered dream of a clerk in the Herald's office. "It is the gothic fiend of our legends," said Blake—"the true devil—all else are apocryphal."

These stories are scarcely credible, yet there can be no doubt of their accuracy. Another friend, on whose veracity I have the fullest dependence, called one evening on Blake, and found him sitting with a pencil and a panel, drawing a portrait with all the seeming anxiety of a man who is conscious that he has got a fastidious sitter; he looked and drew, and drew and looked, yet no living soul was visible. "Disturb me not," said he, in a whisper, "I have one sitting to me." "Sitting to you!" exclaimed his astonished visitor; "where is he, and what is he?—I see no one." "But I see him, sir," answered Blake, haughtily; "there he is, his name is Lot—you may read of him in the Scripture. *He* is sitting for his portrait."

Had he always thought so idly, and wrought on such

visionary matters, this memoir would have been the story of a madman, instead of the life of a man of genius, some of whose works are worthy of any age or nation. Even while he was indulging in these laughable fancies, and seeing visions at the request of his friends, he conceived, and drew, and engraved one of the noblest of all his productions—the Inventions for the Book of Job. He accomplished this series in a small room, which served him for kitchen, bed-chamber, and study, where he had no other companion but his faithful Katherine, and no larger income than some seventeen or eighteen shillings a-week. Of these Inventions, as the artist loved to call them, there are twenty-one, representing the Man of Uz sustaining his dignity amidst the inflictions of Satan, the reproaches of his friends, and the insults of his wife. It was in such things that Blake shone; the Scripture overawed his imagination, and he was too devout to attempt aught beyond a literal embodying of the majestic scene. He goes step by step with the narrative; always simple, and often sublime—never wandering from the subject, nor overlaying the text with the weight of his own exuberant fancy.

The passages, embodied, will show with what lofty themes he presumed to grapple. 1. Thus did Job continually. 2. The Almighty watches the good man's household. 3. Satan receiving power over Job. 4. The wind from the wilderness destroying Job's children. 5. And I alone am escaped to tell thee. 6. Satan smiting Job with sore boils. 7. Job's friends comforting him. 8. Let the day perish wherein I was born. 9. Then a spirit passed before my face. 10. Job laughed to scorn by his friends. 11. With dreams upon my bed thou scarest me—thou affrightest me with visions. 12. I am young and ye are old, wherefore I was afraid. 13. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. 14. When the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. 15. Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee. 16. Thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked. 17. I have heard thee with the hearing of my ear, but now my eye rejoiceth in

thee. 18. Also the Lord accepted Job. 19. Every one also gave him a piece of money. 20. There were not found women fairer than the daughters of Job. 21. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.

While employed on these remarkable productions, he was made sensible that the little approbation which the world had ever bestowed on him was fast leaving him. The waywardness of his fancy, and the peculiar execution of his compositions, were alike unadapted for popularity; the demand for his works lessened yearly from the time that he exhibited his "Canterbury Pilgrimage;" and he could hardly procure sufficient to sustain life, when old age was creeping upon him. Yet, poverty-stricken as he was, his cheerfulness never forsook him—he uttered no complaint—he contracted no debt—and continued to the last manly and independent. It is the fashion to praise genius when it is gone to the grave—the fashion is cheap and convenient. Of the existence of Blake few men of taste could be ignorant—of his great merits multitudes knew, nor was his extreme poverty any secret. Yet he was reduced—one of the ornaments of the age—to a miserable garret and a crust of bread, and would have perished from want, had not some friends, neither wealthy nor powerful, averted this disgrace from coming upon our country. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Linnell, employed Blake to engrave his "Inventions of the Book of Job;" by this he earned money enough to keep him living—for the good old man still laboured with all the ardour of the days of his youth, and with skill equal to his enthusiasm. These engravings are very rare, very beautiful, and very peculiar. They are in the earlier fashion of workmanship, and bear no resemblance whatever to the polished and graceful style which now prevails. I have never seen a tinted copy, nor am I sure that tinting would accord with the extreme simplicity of the designs, and the mode in which they are handled. "The Songs of Innocence," and these "Inventions for Job," are the happiest of Blake's works, and ought to be in the portfolios of all who are lovers of nature and imagination.

Two extensive works, bearing the ominous names of "Prophecies," one concerning America, the other Europe, next made their appearance from his pencil and graver. The first contains eighteen, and the other seventeen plates, and both are plentifully seasoned with verse, without the incumbrance of rhyme. It is impossible to give a satisfactory description of these works; the frontispiece of the latter, representing the Ancient of Days, in an orb of light, stooping into chaos, to measure out the world, has been admired less for its meaning than for the grandeur of its outline. A head and a tail-piece in the other have been much noticed; one exhibits the bottom of the sea, with enormous fishes preying on a dead body—the other, the surface, with a dead body floating, on which an eagle with outstretched wings is feeding. The two angels pouring out the spotted plague upon Britain—an angel standing in the sun, attended by three furies—and several other Inventions in these wild works, exhibit wonderful strength of drawing and splendour of colouring. Of loose prints—but which were meant doubtless to form part of some extensive work—one of the most remarkable is the "Great Sea Serpent;" and a figure sinking in a stormy sea at sunset—the glow of which, with the foam upon the dark waves, produces a magical effect.

After a residence of seventeen years in South Molton Street, Blake removed (not in consequence, alas! of any increase of fortune) to No. 3 Fountain Court, Strand. This was in the year 1823. Here he engraved by day and saw visions by night, and occasionally employed himself in making Inventions for Dante; and such was his application that he designed in all one hundred and two, and engraved seven. It was publicly known that he was in a declining state of health; that old age had come upon him, and that he was in want. Several friends, and artists among the number, aided him a little, in a delicate way, by purchasing his works, of which he had many copies. He sold many of his "Songs of Innocence," and also of "Urizen," and he wrought incessantly upon what he counted his masterpiece,

the "Jerusalem," tinting and adorning it, with the hope that his favourite would find a purchaser. No one, however, was found ready to lay out twenty-five guineas on a work which no one could have any hope of comprehending, and this disappointment sank to the old man's heart.

He had now reached his seventy-first year, and the strength of nature was fast yielding. Yet he was to the last cheerful and contented. "I glory," he said, "in dying, and have no grief but in leaving you, Katherine: we have lived happy, and we have lived long; we have been ever together, but we shall be divided soon. Why should I fear death? Nor do I fear it. I have endeavoured to live as Christ commands, and have sought to worship God truly—in my own house, when I was not seen of men." He grew weaker and weaker—he could no longer sit upright; and was laid in his bed, with no one to watch over him save his wife, who, feeble and old herself, required help in such a touching duty.

The "Ancient of Days" was such a favourite with Blake, that three days before his death he sat bolstered up in bed, and tinted it with his choicest colours and in his happiest style. He touched and retouched it—held it at arm's length, and then threw it from him, exclaiming, "There! that will do! I cannot mend it!" He saw his wife in tears—she felt this was to be the last of his works. "Stay, Kate!" (cried Blake) "keep just as you are—I will draw your portrait—for you have ever been an angel to me." She obeyed, and the dying artist made a fine likeness.*

The very joyfulness with which this singular man welcomed the coming of death made his dying moments intensely mournful. He lay chanting songs, and the verses and the music were both the offspring of the moment. He lamented that he could no longer commit those inspirations, as he called them, to paper. "Kate," he said, "I am

* It is described by Mr. Tatham, who saw it at the time it was drawn, as "a frenzied sketch of some power, highly interesting, but not like."

a changing man—I always rose and wrote down my thoughts, whether it rained, snowed, or shone, and you arose too and sat beside me; this can be no longer." He died on the 12th of August 1827, without any visible pain —his wife, who sat watching him, did not perceive when he ceased breathing.

William Blake was of low stature and slender make, with a high pallid forehead, and eyes large, dark, and expressive. His temper was touchy, and when moved, he spoke with an indignant eloquence, which commanded respect. His voice, in general, was low and musical, his manners gentle and unassuming, his conversation a singular mixture of knowledge and enthusiasm. His whole life was one of labour and privation—he had never tasted the luxury of that independence which comes from professional profit. This untoward fortune he endured with unshaken equanimity—offering himself, in imagination, as a martyr in the great cause of poetic art;—*pitying* some of his more fortunate brethren for their inordinate love of gain; and not doubting that whatever he might have won in gold by adopting other methods would have been a poor compensation for the ultimate loss of fame. Under this agreeable delusion he lived all his life; he was satisfied when his graver gained him a guinea a-week—the greater the present denial, the surer the glory hereafter.

Though he was the companion of Flaxman and Fuseli, and sometimes their pupil, he never attained that professional skill without which all genius is bestowed in vain. He was his own teacher chiefly; and self-instruction, the parent occasionally of great beauties, seldom fails to produce great deformities. He was a most splendid tinter, but no colourist, and his works were all of small dimensions, and therefore confined to the cabinet and the portfolio. His happiest flights, as well as his wildest, are thus likely to remain shut up from the world. If we look at the man through his best and most intelligible works, we shall find that he who could produce the "Songs of Innocence" and "Experience," the "Gates of Paradise" and the

"Inventions for Job," was the possessor of very lofty faculties, with no common skill in art, and moreover that, both in thought and mode of treatment, he was a decided original. But should we, shutting our eyes to the merits of those works, determine to weigh his worth by his "Urizen," his "Prophecies of Europe and America," and his "Jerusalem," our conclusion would be very unfavourable; we would say that, with much freedom of composition and boldness of posture, he was unmeaning, mystical, and extravagant, and that his original mode of working out his conceptions was little better than a brilliant way of animating absurdity. An overflow of imagination is a failing uncommon in this age, and has generally received of late little quarter from the critical portion of mankind. Yet imagination is the life and spirit of all great works of genius and taste; and, indeed, without it, the head thinks and the hand labours in vain. Ten thousand authors and artists rise to the proper, the graceful, and the beautiful, for ten who ascend into "the heaven of invention." A work, whether from poet or painter, conceived in the fiery ecstasy of imagination, lives through every limb; while one elaborated out by skill and taste only will look, in comparison, like a withered and sapless tree beside one green and flourishing. Blake's misfortune was that of possessing this precious gift in excess. His fancy overmastered him, until he at length confounded "the mind's eye" with the corporeal organ, and dreamed himself out of the sympathies of actual life.

His method of colouring was a secret which he kept to himself, or confided only to his wife; he believed that it was revealed in a vision, and that he was bound in honour to conceal it from the world. "His modes of preparing his grounds," says Smith, in his "Supplement to the Life of Nollekens," "and laying them over his panels for printing, mixing his colours, and manner of working, were those which he considered to have been practised by the early fresco painters, whose productions still remain in many instances vividly and permanently fresh. His ground was a mixture of whiting and carpenters' glue, which he

passed over several times in the coatings; his colours he ground himself, and also united with them the same sort of glue, but in a much weaker state. He would, in the course of painting a picture, pass a very thin transparent wash of glue-water over the whole of the parts he had worked upon, and then proceed with his finishing. He had many secret modes of working, both as a colourist and an engraver. His method of eating away the plain copper, and leaving the lines of his subjects and his words as stereotype, is, in my mind, perfectly original. Mrs. Blake is in possession of the secret, and she ought to receive something considerable for its communication, as I am quite certain it may be used to advantage, both to artists and literary characters in general." The affection and fortitude of this woman entitle her to much respect. She shared her husband's lot without a murmur, set her heart solely upon his fame, and soothed him in those hours of misgiving and despondency which are not unknown to the strongest intellects. She still lives to lament the loss of Blake—and *feel* it.

Of Blake's merits as a poet I have already spoken: but something more may be said, for there is a simplicity and a pathos in many of his snatches of verse worthy of the olden muse. On all his works there is an impress of poetic thought, and, what is still better, a gentle humanity and charitable feeling towards the meanest work of God, such as few bards have indulged in. On the orphan children going to church on Holy Thursday, the following touching verses were composed—they are inserted between the procession of girls and the procession of boys in one of his singular engravings:—

"'Twas on a Holy Thursday,
their innocent faces clean,
Came children walking two and two,
in red, and blue, and green;
Grey-headed beadles walked before
with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's,
they like Thames waters flow.

O, what a multitude they seemed,
these flowers of London town
Seated in companies they sit,
with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there,
but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls
raising their innocent hands.
Now, like a mighty wind, they raise
to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings,
the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men,
wise guardians of the poor,
Then cherish pity, lest you drive
an angel from your door."

Under the influence of gayer feelings he wrote what he called the "Laughing Song;" his pencil drew young men and maidens merry round a table, and a youth, with a plumed cap in one hand and a wine-cup in the other, chaunts these gladsome verses :—

"When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it.

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary, and Susan, and Emily,
With their sweet round mouths sing ha! ha! he!

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread;
Come live and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of ha! ha! he!"

In the "Song of the Lamb" there is a simplicity which seems easily attained till it is tried, and a religious tenderness of sentiment in perfect keeping with the poetry. A naked child is pencilled standing beside a group of lambs, and these verses are written underneath :—

"Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave the clothing of delight,
Softest clothing—woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls himself a lamb;
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child;
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee;
Little lamb, God bless thee."

It would be unjust to the memory of the painter and poet to omit a song which he composed in honour of that wife who repaid with such sincere affection the regard which he had for her. It has other merits.

"I love the jocund dance,
The softly breathing song,
Where innocent eyes do glance,
And where lisps the maiden's tongue.

I love the laughing vale,
I love the echoing hill,
Where mirth does never fail,
And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

I love the pleasant cot,
I love the innocent bower,
Where white and brown is our lot,
Or fruit at the mid-day hour.

I love the oaken seat,
Beneath the oaken tree,
Where all the old villagers meet,
And laugh our sports to see.

I love our neighbours all,—
But, Kitty, I better love thee,
And love them I ever shall,
But thou art all to me."

Images of a sterner nature than those of domestic lov were, however, at all times, familiar to his fancy: I hav shown him softened down to the mood of babes and sucklings; I shall exhibit him in a more martial temper. In a ballad, which he calls "Gwinn, King of Norway," there are many vigorous verses—the fierce Norwegian has invaded England with all his eager warriors.

"Like reared stones around a grave
They stand around their king."

But the intrepid islanders are nothing dismayed; they gather to the charge: these are the words of Blake forty-six years ago—and this man's poetry obtained no notice, while Darwin and Hayley were gorged with adulation.

"The husbandman now leaves his plough
To wade through fields of gore,
The merchant binds his brows in steel,
And leaves the trading shore.

The shepherd leaves his mellow pipe,
And sounds the trumpet shrill,
The workman throws his hammer down,
To heave the bloody bill.

Like the tall ghost of Barraton,
Who sports in stormy sky,
Gwinn leads his host, as black as night,
When pestilence does fly.

With horses and with chariots,—
And all his spearmen bold
March to the sound of mournful song,
Like clouds around him rolled.

The armies stand like balances
Held in the Almighty's hand,
Gwinn, thou hast filled thy measure up,
Thou'rt swept from out the land.

Earth smokes with blood, and groans and shakes
To drink her children's gore,
A sea of blood! nor can the eye
See to the trembling shore.

And on the verge of this wild sea
Famine and death do cry,
The shrieks of women and of babes
Over the field do fly."

As Blake united poetry and painting in all his compositions, I have endeavoured to show that his claims to the distinction of a poet were not slight. He wrought much and slept little, and has left volumes of verse, amounting, it is said, to nearly an hundred, prepared for the press. If they are as wild and mystical as the poetry of his "Urizen," they are as well in manuscript—if they are as natural and touching as many of his "Songs of Innocence," a judicious selection might be safely published.*

* *Vide* "The Poems of William Blake." With selections from his Prose Writings. Edited, with a biographical and critical introduction, by Joseph Skipsey. (London: Walter Scott. *Canterbury Poets* Series.)

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